

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

No. 468.

NEW YORK, MAY 22, 1907.

Price 5 Cents.

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By HOWARD AUSTIN.



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CHAPTER I.

THE VICTIMS OF THE WRECK.

The dreadful winter of 1865 must be yet remembered by everybody who experienced it, although what it was in our latitudes was nothing to the severity it developed further north.

It was just at the commencement of this remarkable winter that Captain Blaine, of the United States exploring ship Columbus, got caught in the pack ice and was wrecked on an island in the Arctic ocean.

The ship was a total wreck, and with much difficulty Captain Blaine and his crew of twenty-five sailors and officers managed to make their way to the island in the long boat, the only one saved, and which was only capable of carrying the company, with scarcely any provisions for them to subsist upon.

It was one of the most desolate spots on the face of the earth, and the prospect of rescue from their perilous situation was extremely uncertain, as only a few of the most venturesome whalers ever penetrated so far north at this season of the year.

But here they were on this dreadful island, completely covered, if not made up of ice, and thousands of miles away from home or civilization.

Their case was hopeless indeed, but it was made even worse by the spirit of insubordination which existed among the crew, led by the first mate, Hank Walker, as great a rascal as ever cut a throat or scuttled a ship.

Captain Blaine had started out on this expedition the year before, hoping to discover the northwest passage and reach the North Pole.

He was a fine-looking, powerful man of about fifty years of age; a thorough sailor, and a man of education and great ambition.

With him was his son James, aged fifteen, a lad earnestly awake and full of the spirit of discovery, and who had been allowed to go along with the expedition at his persistent and earnest solicitation; and being a very rugged boy, his father

finally consented that he should quit school in order to accompany him to the frozen regions of the north.

The first year out had been a successful one in many respects, and they were on their way to the south when the great misfortune, before spoken of, happened to them.

At the opening of our story Captain Blaine and his son were standing on a high promontory, and gazing intently out upon the boundless ocean in the hope of seeing a sail of some kind that could be signaled to, while the crew stood near an inlet, in which floated the long boat with which they had escaped from the wreck, that still lay a mile or so from them, dismantled and broken.

"Seaman! Navigator!" sneered Hank Walker, who had already been wrangling with the crew, the most of whom were favorable to him. "There lays a specimen of his seamanship," he added, pointing to the dismantled hulk of the Columbus. "Who says he is a good sailor? Who has the cheek to call him a navigator?"

"But the pack ice, mate, that—" ventured a sailor.

"That should have been avoided; would have been avoided by a good seaman. But it's all right if you will submit to it," said Walker, turning away.

For a moment there was nothing said, but after awhile the crew began to growl again.

"Well, mate, what do you propose?" one of them finally asked, touching his cap.

"Oh, I am not commander here, so of course I have nothing to propose," said Walker, sullenly.

The sailors exchanged glances again.

"But if yer was commander, what then?" asked a sullen rascal.

"If I was, I'd get out of this mighty quick."

"Ah! then we'll make you captain."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes—yes!" was the general shout.

"But this is mutiny."

"We don't care! We want a change!"

"And you will all stick to me?"

"Yes—yes!" they all cried.

"Will you swear to do so?"

"Yes—yes, we swear!" they all said, earnestly, for if ever

there was a ship's crew ready for mutiny and revolt, it was the wrecked crew of the Columbus."

"And you renounce Captain Blaine?"

"Yes—yes!"

"And swear allegiance to me?"

"Yes—yes; we do!"

"That settles it," said Walker, going around and shaking hands with each of the crew. "But lay low. Here comes Blaine and his kid," he added, in an undertone.

At that moment Captain Blaine and his son came down from the lookout they had been maintaining so long.

There was a look of sadness in the old navigator's eyes as he walked among his crew without speaking. There was a load on his heart too great for words.

None of them looked at him, and Walker stood apart as though in deep thought.

Among the crew was a ruffian by the name of Jack Studley, a big, burly fellow, who was forever in a row with either the officers or men; one of those chronic growlers to be found in any ship's crew, and only two days before the wreck he had refused to obey an order given by Captain Blaine, and had received a well-merited beating at his hands, since which time he had maintained a dogged silence toward all hands, even in the hour of wreck.

The members of the crew knew well enough, however, that he would revenge himself on Blaine at the first opportunity, and although he took no part in the revolt just agreed upon, they knew well enough that he was with them to any extent, although everyone of them hated him.

"Well, my son, things don't look very hopeful," said Captain Blaine, finally.

A grunt was the only response.

"But this island may be inhabited, and I have made up my mind to explore it. You remain here, and watch if anything comes ashore from the hulk, and I will return in a few hours and report what I find."

And then going closer to Walker, he added:

"Mate, see that the men don't get at that cask of brandy while I am gone. We must keep that for any case of emergency that might arise."

Hank Walker made no response, and taking up the only piece of firearms that had been preserved, he motioned to his son and walked away, climbing over the glaciers and huge cakes of pack ice.

The crew watched him out of sight without speaking a word, and then they turned to Walker.

"Oh, I'll keep the men from the brandy, will I! We shall see about that," said he, picking up a hatchet and moving towards the cask. "Men, do you want brandy?"

"Yes—yes, of course we do!" they all cried.

"Well, help yourselves," he said, smashing in the head of the cask. "That's the kind of a commander I am," he added, throwing down the hatchet.

With a glad shout they all rushed for the now open cask and free grog. There was one tin dipper among them, and then followed a savage struggle for the first chance to use it.

One after another seized it and dipped it full from the open cask and drank as long as they could hold their breath.

Finally Jack Studley, who until then had stood apart from the others, rushed up and snatched the cup from one of his messmates.

"Hold on, Jack," protested the sailor.

"Hold on! I'll hold on to your cursed windpipe if you give me any of your back talk," growled Jack, and then going to the cask, he drank nearly a pint of raw brandy which he dipped eagerly from it.

The others looked on in dogged silence, for not one of them was there who did not fear him.

"I say, Jack, are you with us?" asked Walker, after the rascal had drunk his brandy.

"With yer! How?"

"Are you going to stick to Captain B'aine?"

"Yes!" replied Jack, savagely.

"Yes?" they all asked.

"Yes, I'll stick to him—until I have his heart's blood!" he hissed, after a moment's hesitation.

"Ha, ha, ha! I thought so," said Walker. "You are just the man we want. Do you join with us and acknowledge me commander?"

"No!" said Studley gazing around from one to another. "You are all a set of landlubbers; I have but one object to live for now—revenge; and I'll have it, never fear. Where is he?" he asked, looking around and bracing up as he began to feel the effects of the brandy he had drank.

"Gone to see what he can find."

"Has he gone to find a place to dig his grave?"

"I guess so."

"He is doing well, for he shall fill it before he is much older."

"But will you not join us?" asked a sailor.

"Join you! join the evil one! What better is Hank Walker than old Blaine? Ah! he and I have a score to settle yet," he added, walking away.

"Never mind him. I'll tell you what we'll do; we'll put to sea in the long boat and leave Blaine and his kid and Jack Studley here together. That will give Jack all the chance he wants to get even with him. In fact, we shall be well rid of the three of them, for that will give us more room in the long boat," said Walker, aside.

"Ay—ay!"

"Hush! here comes Blaine!"

The crew scattered around and looked in any other direction than the one from which he was coming.

"Men," said Captain Blaine, "I am sorry to tell you that this is a wholly barren island, probably five hundred miles from Spitzbergen. In fact, it is little better than an iceberg. And to make it worse for us, the terrible night of four months' duration, which occurs in these high latitudes every year, is just coming upon us."

"Father, what shall we do?" asked his son.

"Do the best we can, and show ourselves worthy of being American seamen. What—who has broken open the cask of brandy?" he asked, gazing from it to the crew, who were now entirely under the influence of it.

"The captain bust it," said a sailor, insolently.

"The captain?"

"Yes, Captain Walker," said Walker, going toward him with folded arms, and a most insolent swagger.

"What! Mutiny?"

"Call it what you like. The men have chosen me captain, and I shall act for them accordingly."

"Hank Walker, do you dare look at me and say that you have headed this mutiny?" demanded Captain Blaine, severely.

"Yes; is that enough?"

Captain Blaine was wild in an instant. Glancing around he saw that the revolt was general, and that he had no hope.

"Lemme fix this with him," said Studley, staggering toward them.

In his grasp he held the hatchet with which Walker had broken in the head of the brandy cask, and it was evident that he meant murder.

Quick as thought Captain Blaine seized the rascal, and after a moment's struggle he wrenched the weapon from

him and hurled him five times his length upon the ground, where he continued to lie, prone, stunned and seemingly dead.

"Who next?" demanded the brave captain, glancing from one to another.

"All!" they shouted, turning upon him.

"All?"

"Ay, all! We have done with you."

"And are you all going to follow this scoundrel?" he asked, pointing to Hank Walker.

"Yes—yes!" was the response.

"Twenty-five to one! You are a brave lot, are you not?" he demanded, sneeringly. "What is it you want?"

"We have decided what we want, and we have also decided how to obtain it," said Walker.

"How?"

"We are going to put to sea in the long boat."

"Very good; that is the very thing I had made up my mind to do," said Captain Blaine.

"Indeed! Well, we have concluded to go without you," sneered Walker.

"Without me?" exclaimed Blaine.

"Yes."

"You cannot mean it!"

"You shall see whether we mean it or not."

"But my son—"

"Keep him with you."

"But you are men—you cannot be all brutes. This is a barren island; an iceberg; you would not abandon us here?"

"Yes!" they all said, sullenly.

"Oh, don't do that—please don't do that!" pleaded the son of Captain Blaine, going to the leader.

"Are you determined?"

"Yes."

"Then take my boy with you. Do not leave him here to perish in this dark northern cold."

"Bah! Come, men, get into the long boat. We will board the old hulk out there and get provisions enough to last us to some whaling station, and then we shall be all right," said Walker, and instantly, with a glad shout, they made a rush for the boat.

"Men! Gentlemen, you cannot be in earnest!" said Captain Blaine, scarcely able to comprehend such a cowardly procedure.

"Oh, we aren't, eh? Wait and see," said Walker, taking his seat in the stern of the boat.

"But you will take my boy?"

"No."

"But here is Jack Studley. You surely cannot mean to leave him here," said the son, pointing to the sullen rascal who still lay where his father had flung him.

"Oh, we will leave him with you. He will most likely make it lively for you," and with a derisive laugh they shoved the boat from shore and six oars dipped at the same moment, sending her through the floating cakes of ice and away from the terrible island.

Utterly paralyzed, Captain Blaine and his boy stood and watched their departure as they sent back their mocking laughs, and rowed toward the hulk of the Columbus.

"Are they really going to leave us, father?"

"There can be no doubt about it, my son. They are brutes, every one of them," replied Captain Blaine, sadly.

"See, they are rowing towards the hulk!"

"Yes; they are probably going there to get some provisions to last them on their journey. Oh, the heartless rascals!"

"What will become of us, father?" asked the boy, clinging to him.

"God only knows, my boy. The island is perfectly sterile, and scarcely a bird ventures here," said he, walking a short

distance away. "Ah! they have overlooked the gun!" he added, catching it up, with an expression of ecstasy.

"And here is a box of ammunition!" said the boy, catching it up eagerly.

"Thank God! We shall be enabled now to shoot an occasional gull or other bird, and perhaps in this way keep off starvation until some succor may come to us," exclaimed Captain Blaine.

"True; but what shall we do for a shelter?"

"I had not thought of that," replied the old man, sadly. "There is not a tree or shrub upon the island. But perhaps we can find a cave somewhere."

"A cave in the ice!"

"Even that would protect us from the blasts which sweep the island with such paralyzing breath."

"Yes, but there are three of us, and one our most avowed enemy. Oh, I am afraid of that man," said he, again clinging to his father.

"You need not be. He is a cowardly wretch, and will not dare to harm you while I am here with you."

"Look, father!" cried the youth, pointing to the hulk.

CHAPTER II.

ABANDONED IN THE PACK ICE.

The exclamation from the son of Captain Blaine attracted the attention of the father, of course, and looking in the direction of the dismantled hulk of the Columbus, he saw flames shooting from it, and the mutinous crew rowing away toward the open sea.

"Oh, God! They have destroyed the hope that I was secretly clinging to!" said he, almost completely overcome by his emotion.

"They have set fire to the Columbus!"

"Yes; not content with having abandoned us on this desolate island, they have helped themselves to what provisions they wanted, and have destroyed the rest, hoping and believing that we shall surely starve. Oh, you merciless villains!" he added, springing upon a large boulder of ice, and shaking his fist at the fast receding boat.

A loud, derisive laugh floated back over the expanse of the merciless ocean.

Young Blaine turned to Jack Studley, who still lay in his half-drunken, half-stunned condition.

"Jack—Jack!" he cried, seizing and trying to arouse him; "they have abandoned us! Wake up! They have left us here alone on this desolate island, and have burned the hulk of the Columbus. Wake up, Jack!"

The sullen drunkard raised himself partially, and gazed wildly around.

"See! they have abandoned us. There they go yonder, and we are left alone!"

"Abandoned us?" he asked, hoarsely.

"Yes, there they go. See! and they have abandoned us here together!" the boy almost cried.

"Us! Who is us?" asked Studley, fixing his bloodshot eyes upon him with fierce expression.

"Why, you and I and father," said he, pointing to the captain, who still stood upon an eminence watching the receding mutineers.

"You and I and father? Have they left us here alone?" he asked, savagely.

"Yes. Isn't it too bad?"

"Ah, they have left him for me!" he cried, as he caught

up the hatchet, the only other remaining weapon that had been left them.

"For you?"

"Yes, for me to wreak my vengeance on. Life I do not care for, and freezing is an easy death; but revenge is sweet past all other sweets of life. You shall die first, and he shall see me kill you—see you writhe in agony first, and then I will slay him in cold blood!" he cried, seizing the boy by the hair of the head and pulling him over backwards.

"Help—help—help—father, help!" shrieked the boy.

"Ha, you cry in vain!" shrieked Studley, as he raised the hatchet above his head.

Quick as a flash, Captain Blaine darted to the rescue of his son. Catching up the gun which stood against a wall of ice, he confronted the rascal.

Studley had fondly hoped that both of them were unarmed, and seeing the shotgun aimed at his head, he skulked away like a kicked cur.

"You rascal, what were you about to do?" cried the captain.

"To murder your brat!" hissed Studley.

"Villain, I have a mind to shoot you dead!"

"Never mind; my time for vengeance will come; you cannot escape any more than I can; you have the advantage of me with that gun; but powder and shot cannot always last, but this hatchet will outlast us both; so beware, for I live only to be revenged for what you have done to me!" he hissed, as he darted away and was soon lost to sight behind some glacier jetties.

Captain Blaine watched after him for a moment, and then turned to his son.

"Did he hurt you, my boy?"

"No, but he would have killed me had you not come to my rescue," replied the boy, clinging to him and gazing anxiously in the direction that Studley had gone.

"But he will not dare to return here, now that he finds me better armed than he."

"But what shall we do? It is bad enough to be thus deserted, but to be left with such a fiend as this is, it is dreadful!"

"And yet there is no fear. He has no food or means of procuring any, for he has nothing but that hatchet; so he will surely return to us and forget his animosity."

"Pray God he may, and yet I fear not," said the boy, sadly.

"Be courageous, James, and fear not."

"Father I will pray and fear not."

"So mote it be!"

"Heaven will surely help us, father!"

"My boy, yes; but Heaven helps those most who help themselves. We must contrive to communicate with the world lying south of us," said the captain, leaving his boy and climbing up the steep sides of an iceberg or crag that he might get a better observation.

During the next fifteen minutes he intently watched the motion of the water, the direction of its currents, etc., and finally rejoined his son.

"Is there any ray of hope, father?"

"Only a faint one, my son."

"How faint—what is it, father?" asked the boy, eagerly.

"As nearly as I can judge without the aid of a compass, the tide which sweeps by this island makes toward Spitzbergen. If we only had something that would float a message and be picked up by someone who would come to our rescue."

"A bottle?"

"Yes."

"There is a brandy bottle here somewhere," said the boy, looking around. "I saw Jack Studley drinking from it not

long ago, and when he had finished the contents, he flung it fiercely away."

"Then, of course, it is broken to pieces."

"Let us be sure of it," and he still continued his search among the ice crags. "Ah! here it is!" he finally exclaimed, "and it is not broken."

"Thank God! It may be the means of our rescue. Is there a cork in it?" he asked, eagerly, catching it from the youngster's hands. "No, there is no cork," he added, pathetically.

"But cannot we seal it in some way?"

The captain stood a moment in meditation.

"Perhaps the cork is somewhere hereabouts."

"Search for it, my boy, and meantime I will write a message," said he, taking a memorandum book from his pocket.

Kneeling on one knee, and placing the book upon the other, he wrote as follows:

"Island somewhere near Spitzbergen, about latitude 70, longitude 30 or 40, October 5, 1865. The exploring ship Columbus wrecked and crew mutinied. Captain Blaine and son abandoned by them and left to perish. Come to the rescue!"

CAPTAIN BLAINE."

"There; if the tides favor, this may reach some of the whaling stations or may be picked up by someone who will come to the rescue. God speed it!" he added, fervently, as he folded the message closely.

"I have found the cork, father!" exclaimed the boy, joyously.

"Good! Heaven is on our side! Take heart, my boy, we shall yet escape," he added, as he took the cork from his son's eager hand.

They both knelt, but just as Blaine was on the point of placing the message inside of the bottle, the youth seized and kissed it fervently.

"Poor, dear mother, when she was alive, always told me to waft a kiss with my prayers and they would surely be answered. This message is my prayer and yours, and mamma, who is an angel now, will surely hear it," said he.

"If Heaven does not hear that prayer it must be deaf indeed," said the father, with trembling voice, as he proceeded to fold the paper and thrust it into the neck of the bottle.

"Mamma is there, and she will surely hear it."

"God grant it!" said he, forcing the cork into the bottle with all his strength so as to make sure that no water could penetrate it. "Now then, to throw it far enough out from the ice land on which we are to insure its not striking a cake of ice, and thus splintering and shivering our only hope."

He climbed to an eminence overlooking a space of open water, and watched carefully for a chance to throw the bottle. After waiting for some minutes, he finally discovered an open space, and kissing the messenger once more, he threw it far out into the water.

The tide bore it rapidly away amid the cakes of floating ice.

He watched it till it was lost to view, and then returned to his son.

At this season of the year in these high latitudes, the days are not more than two hours long, and they were rapidly growing shorter. In a short time the sun would slowly sink beneath the southern horizon, and then would follow four months of dreary night and darkness, the meridian light of which would scarcely equal our twilight.

The prospect was dreary enough; but with stout hearts the father and son proceeded to make the best of their situation.

The first thing to do was to contrive some sort of shelter from the bitter winds and storms of snow which seem to prevail continually in these latitudes.

The burning hulk of the Columbus was by this time almost wholly destroyed, and they watched it, as masses of the floating ice seemed to contend with the flames to see which should have the honor of finally destroying what was left.

Suddenly there was an explosion, for the fire had reached a keg of powder, and the air became filled with pieces of the wreck, after which the tide, with its surging burdens of ice, swept over it, and the Columbus was no more, even as a wreck.

Captain Blaine and son knelt, with bowed heads, as though the last hope had gone from them.

CHAPTER III.

A CHANGE OF SCENE.

Six months have passed since the close of the last chapter, and, leaving the characters already introduced in their dreary abode on the ice-ribbed island of the far-away north, where the long night of four months' duration had set in, let us change the scene and become acquainted with other characters who are to figure in the story.

There was assembled one evening at the house of a wealthy merchant in Portland, Maine, a fashionable and cheerful party. There were gathered some seemingly unknown to care, and bright lights shone over fair women and brave men as the music swelled just enough to drown the hum of conversation which was kept up.

Among the most beautiful girls present on this occasion was Miss Clara Blaine, the only daughter of Captain Blaine, whom we already know.

She was fair beyond all her companions, and was courted by all and sought in marriage by many, but by none more ardently than by George Prescott, a handsome and wealthy young man, and the owner of the staunchest and most beautiful first-class steam yacht sailing in eastern waters.

But she had repulsed him in a sweet and merry way, although it was a repulse all the same, and he felt it most keenly, and avoided meeting her whenever he could do so without seeming rude.

Clara Blaine never appeared more beautiful or vivacious than on this occasion. She was the center of an admiring group, many of them old friends and acquaintances of her father, a man quite as highly respected in Portland, his native place, as he was all over the country on account of his many achievements in polar navigation.

It had been at least ten months since they had heard from the Columbus, but there was no alarm felt on that account, for even more than a year had passed on one or two different expeditions of his without his being reported; and so Clara Blaine laughed, danced, sang, flirted, and was as happy and joyous as she could be, never for a moment suspecting the fate that had befallen her heroic father and brother.

George Prescott was there, admired and respected by all, but he was by nature held above the frivolities of life, and now, as ever, took no part in the wilder and more giddy parts of the entertainment, although his admiring eyes lost not one of the graceful evolutions of his heart's ideal as she flitted hither and yon, now and then, even, bestowing a word or smile upon him as he sat apart or conversed with the more sedate people present.

"Poor girl!" he mused, as he watched her. "If she only knew the fate that has befallen her brave father, she would not be quite so joyous."

"Ah, good-evening, George," said an old man, approaching him, "I am glad to see you."

"As I am to see you, Mr. Bailey," he replied, grasping his hand warmly.

"But why are you not dancing with the other young people—have you got your pious legs on?"

"Oh, no, but—"

"But you are still a trifle sore over the refusal of Clara Blaine. Ah! I know it, my boy, I know it. I had just such an experience as that myself once. But it will never do to give way to it, George. Brace right up the same as I did, believing that there is just as good fish in the sea as ever were caught, and you will, I hope, find, as I found, that it is true. And yet you should not be despondent or hopeless, even in relation to Clara. She is young and unsettled yet, and does not know her mind. She certainly is not in love with anyone else."

"Do you think so?" asked Prescott, earnestly.

"Why, I am sure of it. Haven't I known her ever since she was a baby, as I have you, for that matter? And doesn't she associate in the most sisterly and confidential way with my daughters? And doesn't she regard me and my wife as parents almost, especially since her mother's death? And why should I not be in a position to judge of the matter? Yes, I am sure of it, my boy. Brace up, and don't let her think you are pining on her account."

"Sir!"

"Oh, I mean it. I am an old man, and I know the sex pretty well. You seldom gain anything by letting them know that you are so deeply in love with them. Appear indifferent, and pay attention to other girls, and, my word for it, if she has the slightest love for you it will soon manifest itself."

"Do you think so, sir?"

"I tell you I am sure of it. Follow my advice."

"Well, perhaps it is good, but I have got something else to attend to now," said Prescott.

"Indeed, what is it? You certainly cannot mean business, for you are rich enough already, and as for pleasure, why, what greater pleasure can you find than courting the ladies in the hope of winning one of them for a wife?"

"A greater pleasure, sir, as matters are, in doing a humane action."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I shall sail from here in my yacht the day after tomorrow."

"Indeed! Whither away?"

"To the Arctic Ocean."

"What! Going to the Arctic Ocean?" asked the old gentleman, with genuine surprise.

"I am. My crew is all engaged, and just as soon as Captain Walton gets the bunkers filled with coal and a year's provisions on board, I shall immediately set sail."

"But what is the meaning of this? Why do you provision your yacht for so long a time?"

"Because I may have need of such stores," replied Prescott, quietly.

"But why this reticence toward me? Is there any secrecy?"

"Yes, for her sake it is best that secrecy be maintained," said he, glancing to where she stood in animated conversation with a gentleman.

"For her sake! Whose sake?"

"Clara Blaine."

"Confound it, I do not understand you. Is there any reason why I should not?" the old man asked, as if hurt at his want of confidence.

"No, Mr. Bailey, there is not, so long as the nature of the business is kept to ourselves so that it may not reach her ears."

"I can't for the life of me understand you."

"Will you agree to keep the secret if I give it to you?"

"Certainly; why, of course. Do you doubt me?"

"Not for an instant. Let us go into the next room where we may not be so liable either to be observed or overheard," said he, leading the way to another room.

"Ah! here we are, all by ourselves. Now tell me all about it," said the old merchant.

"Look at that," said Prescott, handing him a stained piece of paper.

Mr. Bailey took it and read as follows:

"Island, somewhere near Spitzbergen, about latitude 70, longitude 30 or 40, Oct. 5, 1865. The exploring ship Columbus wrecked and crew mutinied. Captain Blaine and son abandoned by them and left to perish. Come to the rescue."

"CAPTAIN BLAINE."

"Good God!" exclaimed the old merchant. "What does this mean?"

"Evidently what it says."

"But where did you get it?"

"Two days ago, you remember, I returned from quite an extended cruise to the northward?"

"Yes."

"And you know that I picked up a boat's crew of a wrecked whaler?"

"Certainly. The papers are full of the great exploit. Why?"

"The poor fellows are well cared for, now—"

"Of course they are, if you had charge of them."

"After drifting about for two weeks, they picked up a bottle in what they supposed to be latitude 50, and on breaking it, this paper was found."

"God in Heaven!"

"Of course the poor shipwrecked whalers could do nothing. Keeping the document which had been so strangely thrown to them, they continued to drift at the mercy of the chilly deep until I rescued them, as you know. Well, after they had partially recovered, and we were speeding to the south, they told me about the finding of the bottle, and gave me this paper. Now you know whether that is the handwriting of Captain Blaine or not?" he added.

"Why, I will swear to it," said Mr. Bailey.

"And so will I."

"And you propose—"

"To go in search of him," said Prescott, resolutely.

"God bless you, my boy—God bless you!" exclaimed the old man, grasping his hand. "The idea of our friend and distinguished fellow citizen being abandoned among the pack ice of the North Pacific Ocean! Good Heavens! And—and—George, my boy, it is nearly six months since this was written. Only think of it! They may be both dead by this time, and all hope annulled before its birth."

"I hope for the best, Mr. Bailey; but at all events, I may be enabled to recover their bodies, and return them to their friends."

At that instant a wild shriek behind them attracted their attention, and Prescott turned just in time to catch the fainting form of Clara Blaine in his arms.

She had overheard all!

"Good Heavens! She has fainted—and in my arms!" exclaimed Prescott, sustaining the fair burden.

"That is all right—but she has overheard us."

"I fear she has," muttered Prescott, as he bore her to a sofa in the room.

"Are you so very sorry that she has clandestinely learned of your good intentions?"

"Yes; I did not wish her to know it," he mused.

"But she evidently does."

"Yes—yes, I—I overheard all, George Prescott, and I shall not apologize for eavesdropping," said the beautiful girl, recovering from her faint. "My dear father and brother are in danger, if not dead already, and your noble heart prompts you to this rescue. Oh, I never knew how good and true you were before. You are going to find them?" she asked, going toward young Prescott with extended hands.

"Heaven helping me, I will rescue them, Miss Blaine," he replied, modestly.

"But will you not grant me one favor—one other beside the one you so generously propose?"

"If I can I will, Miss Blaine," said he, bowing.

"Allow me to accompany you?"

Prescott started back in surprise.

By this time the room was filled with the other guests who had been attracted by the outcry, and they crowded around Prescott and Miss Blaine.

"Miss Blaine, it is impossible to grant your request."

"Impossible?"

"Yes; for it is not only a rough, unpleasant voyage, but the propriety of the thing might be questioned with very good reason."

"Propriety in such a case—propriety when a daughter and sister goes to the rescue with you!"

"But you forget that you would be the only female on board; think of that, Miss Blaine."

In spite of her earnestness, this struck her with great force, and she hesitated.

"George," said a middle-aged lady, one of the anxious spectators, approaching him.

"Aunt Huldah!" said he, bowing.

The person thus addressing him was his maiden aunt, Miss Huldah Yumper, an eccentric lady of wealth and social position, and greatly attached to her manly, handsome nephew.

"You know how I dislike the water?"

He smiled and bowed.

"I have heard all about the situation, George. Your only objection—and it is a good one—is that Miss Blaine would be the only lady on board?"

He bowed again.

"That shall be remedied."

"How?"

"I will go with her."

"You?"

"And she shall be my companion—I will be her protector," said she, encircling Clara's waist.

"Oh, will you, though?" asked the anxious girl.

"With all my heart, Clara. You will be both safe and proper while I am your protector and chaperone," said she, decidedly.

She was rather a pleasant-faced lady, but with the exception of her nephew, George Prescott, she abominated men of all stations and degrees.

"Oh, you are so good and kind!" said Clara, kissing her with fervor.

"We shall be perfectly safe, and all I want is a maid who can attend to both our wants."

While this conversation was going on between them, Mr. Bailey was assuring George Prescott that it was an excellent arrangement, and urging him to accept it.

"Aunt Huldah, you are a heroine!" said he, taking both her hands.

"George, don't be a flatterer; don't be like the rest of your sex. I am no heroine. I simply think it my duty to accompany this poor, dear girl on this expedition in search of her father and brother. When must we be ready?"

"Day after to-morrow, aunty, at noon."

"Very well. You can be ready, can't you, Clara?"

"Yes; I am ready now," said she, earnestly.

"Nonsense, my dear, you cannot possibly think of going on such a voyage with a low-necked dress on, and exposing your beautiful round shoulders in that way," said she, speaking to her aside.

"I never thought of that. But I will return home at once and get ready," said Clara.

"Do so, and I will engage a waiting maid, and be ready to join you on the yacht before the hour of sailing. But remember, my dear, you must go well provided with wraps and warm furs, for the voyage will be a dreadfully cold one."

"I shall be well prepared," said she, going from the room, leaving the others standing around, talking earnestly regarding the probable fate of the bold navigator of whom they had heard in such a strange way.

"George, go right ahead with your preparations, for we will be all ready to accompany you," said Miss Yumper, bowing, and leaving the room.

The other members of the social gathering clustered around young Prescott, either in quest of more information, or to congratulate him on his heroic resolution to go in search of the bold and hitherto successful navigator.

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING READY TO SAIL.

George Prescott had inherited a fine old family mansion from his father—one of the finest and most aristocratic in the State of Maine; and being an orphan, he lived in it with a few servants and some congenial friends, the envy of hundreds of marriageable girls, but wholly uninfluenced by any of them, save Clara Blaine, who, as we have seen before, did not favor his suit.

His Aunt Huldah Yumper was, in reality, at the head of his household, although she did not make it wholly her home, being independent, and having one of her own, although, in a general way, her will was law there, especially when Prescott was away on his yachting excursions, as he frequently was.

But connected with the establishment, as general superintendent of the outdoor part of it, was an old, superannuated sailor, Jack Jumper, who had been in the elder Prescott's employ for many years, and George regarded him with the same favor that his father had always bestowed upon him; and although he was of but little earthly use, on account of his age and ailments, still he kept him, more for the good he had done than for what he could do, although he was far from being either a sloth or a slouch.

Jack was an Irishman, but from boyhood, almost, a resident of Portland; and he had a few family relations there, among whom was a worthless fellow, a regular Irishman, by the name of Tom O'Shanter, a he'er-do-well of the first water, and as he had no other blood relations there, Jack felt that he was in a measure responsible for him.

Tom had been loafing around for some time, living generally on his old Uncle Jack. He had not long before married a neat little Irish girl, but they had quarreled and separated, and at this date they apparently did not know anything about each other.

By some means or other, Tom heard about the expedition that George Prescott was about to start upon, and thinking that perhaps he might get a good, easy berth through his uncle, he made his appearance at the mansion the next morning after the events spoken of in the last chapter.

Jack Jumper was all business that morning, getting things

in readiness to be taken aboard the yacht, and Tom's appearance was anything but welcome.

"Out of that, yer blackguard!" was his first salutation. "What brings ye here?"

"Me futs," replied Tom, with a broad grin.

"Bad luck ter 'em! Where's yer wife?"

"She left me."

"As she had a right ter do, for no dacint creature would live wid ther loikes av ye. What are ye here for?" he demanded.

"Sure, I want a job, Uncle John."

"Go ter ther devil for it."

"That's what Father Malloy tould me ter do, an' I've obeyed him."

"Out!" exclaimed old Jack.

"Be aisy wid me, Uncle John. Sure, yer moight have been young an' onaisey onct yerself."

"Suppose I was? What then?"

"Sure, then ye know how it is yerself," said Tom, smiling.

"Be out av this! I niver was a blackguard loike yerself. Be away wid ye!"

"I hear that Mr. Prescott is going on a long voyage. Is that so?"

"It is," replied Jack, savagely.

"I'd loike ter go wid him."

"Ye can't; that's flat."

"Now, sure, uncle dear, aren't ye me own mother's brother?" said Tom, coaxingly.

"Bad luck ter me, but it's no credit."

"Sure, I'm goin' ter be good."

"Thin go hang yerself."

"But that wud make ye unhappy, Uncle John."

"Devil a wanst. Try it."

"Sure, ye'd loike me av I war good," said he, smiling sweetly upon him, and he was a handsome, winsome young fellow, a perfect picture of Jack's dead sister.

"Begone wid ye," said he, but not half-mad.

"Do ye moind me, Uncle John? I'm goin' to reform, so I am."

"Reform! It isn't in ye ter do it."

"Give me a chance an' see."

"I've no chance ter give ye."

"Sure, but ye can make one."

"How?"

"On board the Yankee Land, so ye can."

"Devil a wanst."

"Why not?"

"Because the complement is full."

"Every berth taken?"

"Yis, every one."

"Thin how am I goin' to reform? Sure, ye can do it if ye wish, Uncle John," said he, coaxingly.

"I tell ye there isn't a show. The crew is all engaged and aboard."

"Couldn't I get on as cabin boy?"

"No, there's one engaged. Devil a thing is there but one," said the old sailor.

"What's that?"

"Well, what's that to you?"

"I don't know. Tell me, an' then maybe I can tell you," said Tom, smiling.

"Begone wid yer!"

"Tell me, Uncle John."

"Begone, I tell yer!"

"Sure, yer wudn't be onkoind ter the son av yer own sister," said he, pleadingly.

"Don't I tell yer that there's no chance?"

"But yer said there was one chance."

THE WRECK OF THE "COLUMBUS."

"I did? Why, bad luck ter yer handsome face, what der yer think that chance is?"

"Faith, I'd like ter know."

"Well, I'll be afther tellin' yer. It's a lady's maid ter Miss Yumper. Now fut der yer say?" asked the old man, laughing.

This did rather stump the young scapegrace, and he remained silent while his uncle continued to laugh at his discomfiture.

"Uncle John!" said he finally, as though a brilliant idea had struck him.

"What is it?"

"Will ye befriend me?"

"Haven't I done it many a toime, ye young spalpeen?"

"I want ter get away from this."

"An' lave yer darlint wife?"

"Sure, she'll be sorry, an' glad ter get me back again when I return."

"Then she's not the sensible girl I think she is?"

"Well, niver moind. Will ye help me?"

"How?"

"I'll go for ther lady's maid!"

"You!"

"So I will."

"Yer crazy!"

"So I am, ter get out av this. Sure, I think she'll have me arrested for abandonment."

"As she ought. But phat do yer mane by wantin' ter go as lady's maid?"

"Now, Uncle John, yer wouldn't want ter see me carried ter prison—yer own flesh an' blood—wud yer? I can dress loike a maid, an' have a long, foine trip; an' afther that I'll settle down an' be aisey."

Old Jack was silent a moment. He knew very well that Tom was liable to be arrested for abandoning his young wife, as he had done on account of a little ruction between them; and, to tell the truth, he would rather have him out of the way than not for awhile, feeling certain that a few months of separation would bring them both to their senses, and this set him to thinking.

"Can ye dress loike a girl?" he finally asked.

"I can. I have some av Kate's clothes at home."

"Go an' let me see ye do it," said he, pushing him from the room.

He had scarcely gone, when Miss Huldah Yumper entered it.

"Ah, Mr. Jack, I am in trouble," said she.

"For ther want av a man, miss?" he asked, touching his hat respectfully.

"No—no! What nonsense, sir! The idea of my being in trouble on account of a man!" said she, indignantly.

"I beg yer pardon, miss, but when yer come ter a man an' says as how yer were in trouble, why shouldn't I think it war on account of a man?"

"Nothing of the sort, sir! You know I told you that I was in want of a waiting-maid to accompany me on this expedition, and I have not yet been able to find one. Do you know of a person who could fill the office?"

"I think I do, miss," replied Jack.

"Indeed! Where is she—who is she?"

"Shure, she's me nace."

"Your niece? Well, that would be capital. Is she used to the sea?"

"She is, Miss Yumper. But, sure, she is not a very pretty girl."

"Oh, I don't care for that. Beauty is not indispensable to the office," said she, laughing.

"An' she's not very graceful aither, miss."

"Even that is not a necessary quality, provided she is attentive, healthy and understands her business."

"Och! but she's all health!" exclaimed Jack.

"Where is she?"

"I'll send for her at wanst, miss."

"Do so without delay, for I must have this part of the business settled. Have her here as quickly as possible and I will soon return," said Miss Yumper, hurrying from the room.

"Begorra, but this is a lark!" mused Jack; "I wonder can the young blackguard carry it out without betraying himself? It'll be ther death av us both if he makes a mess of it," he mused, as he proceeded with the packing of a trunk.

In the course of half an hour Tom O'Shanter returned to the house, made up so nicely that even old Jack did not know him, for, in spite of his being a ne'er-do-well, he had many smart things about him, and dressing in women's clothes so as to imitate a girl was one of them.

"Is that yerself, Tom?" asked Jack.

"It is. How'd yer loike me, uncle?" asked Tom, whirling around coquettishly.

"Sure, but that bates me entirely. She was just here, an' she wants yer bad."

"Whoop! I'm ready," exclaimed Tom.

"Hush, bad luck ter yer! Der yer think a dacint girl wud be shoutin' an' howlin' that way? Be aisy, or you'll spoil all. Now, whist! Yer name's Maggie O'Shanter; der yer moind?"

"I do."

"An' yer must be as much loike a girl as yer look all ther toime. Hush, I hear her comin'! Look yer best now," said he, pushing him into a chair.

Tom had some trouble in arranging his wardrobe soon enough to meet the emergency, but he had just succeeded in doing so when the door opened and Miss Yumper entered.

"Ah, is this the young person, Mr. Jack?"

"It is, miss."

Tom got up, somewhat awkwardly, and made as polite a bow as he could in petticoats.

"Miss Maggie O'Shanter, at yer service, mum."

"Well, Maggie, do you feel competent to take the position?"

"Faix, miss, I fale compitint ter take anything that don't weigh a ton, so I do," replied Tom.

"Have you ever waited on ladies?"

"Sure, I have; one especially."

"Was she pleased with you?"

"Troth, she seemed ter be, miss."

"Have you a character?"

"Sure I have, an' a good one."

"Let me see it."

Tom started back in surprise, and Jack acted very nervous, evidently fearing that he would "put his foot in it."

"Let me see it, please. Don't you understand me. I mean your recommendation from this lady."

"Oh, now I see it. Faix, I lost it."

"Lost it?"

"So I did. I had it in me stockin' away up here—" and he was on the point of pulling up his dress.

"Ah, put down—put down!" she cried, turning suddenly away.

"All right, miss. But as I war a-sayin', I had' it tucked away in me stockin', an' I lost it."

"Well, never mind. You are recommended by your uncle here, and I will engage you. Go at once and get your things on board the yacht, and be there to join me by noon tomorrow," said she, and again hurried from the room.

"Whoop!" exclaimed Tom, dancing around.

"Whist! ye blackguard!" said Jack.

"It's all right, Uncle John."

"Whist! Be aisy, will ye? Sure, yer'll spoil everything. Away wid ye, an' moind ye, don't give it all away."

"Whoop!" exclaimed Tom, rushing away.

Jack watched him until he left the grounds, and then returned to his work, not feeling exactly right over the business, and evidently fearful that Tom would make a mess of it.

Excitement by this time ran high in Portland, for the news had got about, and the morning papers published the matter with comments, and also stated that young George Prescott was to sail at once in his fine steam yacht *Yankee Land*, in the hope of discovering the unknown island and rescuing the unfortunate mariners.

Finally the time came for sailing, and a large crowd of people gathered on the wharf to see the humane expedition set out. Everybody was on board, including Clara Blaine, Miss Yumper, and "Maggie" O'Shanter, attending industriously to business, and evidently anxious to make a good impression at first.

While everything was being got in readiness for sailing, George Prescott entertained several distinguished citizens in his private cabin, among whom was an old bachelor, a German scientist, by the name of Hans Scatterbiter, who took a great interest in the expedition, and only regretted that he could not accompany it. But he also took a great interest in the brandy with which the table was well stocked, and the result was the old fellow got knocked out an hour before the yacht was ready to sail, and without being observed, he stole into a bunk in one of the staterooms, and there went calmly and peacefully to sleep.

But at length everything was in readiness, and Prescott parted with his friends at the gangway, after which he gave the signal to Captain Walton, and in a few minutes the beautiful *Yankee Land* glided gracefully from her wharf, amid the loud acclams and good wishes of those on shore, and headed proudly out of the harbor, bound on her errand of mercy.

CHAPTER V.

ON BOARD THE YANKEE LAND.

We parted company with the beautiful steam yacht *Yankee Land*, as she was steaming out of the harbor of Portland, Maine, bound to the North Pacific Ocean in search of Captain Blaine and his son, who had been cruelly abandoned on a desolate island away up in northern latitudes where there is a dreadful night of three months, and where scarce anything can live on account of the dreadful cold.

The party on board will also be remembered, consisting as it did of George Prescott, owner of the *Yankee Land*, Clara Blaine, daughter of Captain Blaine, of whom they were in search, Miss Hulda Yumper, aunt of Prescott, and accompanying the expedition as friend and companion of Clara; and "Maggie" O'Shanter, her maid.

We shall presently have another to introduce.

The yacht steamed away down the harbor, past and between Bangs Island and Peaks Island, past the Portland Light and out into the Atlantic Ocean, when Captain Walton turned her prow to the northward, headed for Newfoundland, the first place they were to stop at, even if it should be found necessary or thought best to stop at all.

A more magnificent craft than was the *Yankee Land* can scarcely be conceived of. She was one hundred and fifteen feet in length, fifteen feet beam, and twelve feet six inches depth of hold, built in the stanchest and yet most elegant

manner, and provided with double acting and very powerful compound engines.

She was, in fact, built to accommodate herself to almost any climate and any water—whether rough or smooth, and at the same time she was fitted up in the most elegant and comfortable manner that talent could devise or money procure. In short, she was little less than a floating palace, and her owner was as proud of her as it was possible for a man to be.

The feelings of Clara Blaine may easily be imagined; but almost the keenest regret of her life was that she had slighted such a noble man as she now knew George Prescott to be. And she gladly would have gone to him and apologized for her rudeness had it not been for Miss Yumper.

"Don't think of such a thing, my dear. Never show such weakness to a man. Be right up on your dignity, my dear, if you wish to win his respect; and, besides, if you go to him in such a way, it may flurry him, for these men are dreadfully flurysome, and on that account the expedition might miscarry. No—no, you do just as I tell you to and all will be well; but, above all things, don't let him—don't let any man think for a moment that you are sorry for anything you have done," said she, earnestly.

"But perhaps he thinks I was rude and that I am not sufficiently grateful for what he is doing for me," protested Clara.

"Nonsense, my dear. George is very much like me—very practical, and but little given to the nonsense of sentiment. He possibly forgot himself once, and offered to marry you, but you had the good sense to refuse him, and by this time he has most likely forgotten all about it and become cured of his weakness."

"Do you think so?" she asked, eagerly.

"Most undoubtedly. Men forget these things so easily."

"Do they?" asked Clara, wonderingly.

"Be assured they do. They make desperate love to us poor girls, but the moment we assert ourselves and tell them to go about their business—what do you think they make their business directly?"

"I am sure I do not know."

"Why, they go right off and make love to some other girl."

"Is that so?" she asked, and her cheeks grew pale as she spoke, although her companion did not notice it, so earnest was she.

"To be sure it is. Never put your faith in a man."

"Were you ever deceived, Miss Yumper?" she asked, after a moment's silence.

"Me? Never! I will not listen to their nonsense; but I have observed them well."

"Do you think Mr. Prescott is that way?" she asked, hesitatingly.

"I know he is. My dear, they are all alike. Some have nicer ways of showing it than others have, but there is really no difference in them, and it is especially the case where a man has been rebuffed once. No—no, Clara, be assured that he is doing this simply for public applause and for the friendship he bears your father. So, my dear, don't mar the arrangement by any expression of sentiment, but just put yourself under my instructions."

"I—I will try to do so," answered she, falteringly.

"Of course you will. I know my nephew, and although he is vastly better than the majority, he is, nevertheless, a man. Where is that girl Maggie, I wonder? Do you feel the motion of the yacht, Clara?"

"Yes; but I rather like it."

"Very well, then, we shall have no disagreeable countr-

temps on board, for you know, my dear, it is dreadfully disagreeable to have any person on board who gets seasick."

"I suppose you are quite used to the water?"

"Oh yes. I often accompany George on his cruises, although I have never been so far north as he proposes to go this time. Maggie, where are you?" she called.

"Oh, I do so hope we shall find father and poor brother," sighed the beautiful girl.

"Ah, be assured we shall, for George Prescott never undertakes a thing that he does not carry out."

"I am glad of that," said she, and at heart she was glad for two reasons, one of which she was ready to express aloud—that he would find her father—and the other which she hid away in her heart.

"Maggie—Maggie O'Shanter! Where are you?"

"I think she must be in the cabin."

"I don't like that girl much. We will keep her to do the menial work, but so far as we are personally concerned, we will attend to our own wants."

"I am amply able to do that, Miss Yumper, and to lend you much assistance besides," said Clara.

"Good! In that way we shall get along all right. But do you know, Clara, I wouldn't be a bit surprised if she was at this moment seasick?"

"Perhaps so."

"And there she told me that she was used to ocean travel, the deceitful thing. The idea of her getting seasick with only this experience! But it is just a little rough, isn't it?" she added, taking a seat near the starboard rail, and beginning to look just a trifle white around the mouth. "Where is that girl?"

"I will go and find her," said Clara, turning away, fully understanding that Miss Yumper herself was getting a dose of seasickness.

In a moment up came "Maggie" O'Shanter, fresh as a daisy, for it will be remembered that he had almost always been a sailor.

He approached Miss Yumper, who by this time had become rapidly worse, and looked as though she had something decidedly serious both on her mind and stomach. Tom saw the point instantly.

"Are ye there, Miss Yumper?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered, faintly, "and where are you? Why do you desert me?"

"Sure, ma'am, I'm here an' I wudn't desert ye for the wurruld, ma'am."

"I—I'm not feeling well," she sighed.

"Truth, then yer belyin' yer looks, so ye are, for I never saw yer lookin' betther," replied Tom, who had kissed the Blarney stone early in life.

"I—I'm seasick, I guess. Do you ever get seasick?"

"Divil a wanst in me loife, ma'am."

"Maggie, don't use such language, don't—I guess I shall—ohup!" and she gave emphatic evidence of a coming eruption.

"Hoy, ma'am, yer afther throwin' up. Turn yer cutwather ter ther leeward, an' let her go. Sure, it'll make ye fale betther, so it will," he added, as she turned a reproachful look upon him.

But her powers of argument and resentment were gone. Much as she abhorred swearing generally, there can be no doubt but that she would have enjoyed the conversation of a pirate just then, or the genial controversy of a pair of truckmen, the wheels of whose respective carts had become interlocked.

"Maggie" O'Shanter was very attentive to her, and after holding her head as she leaned over the rail, until she had made several exclamations of a guttural nature which sound-

ed like "New York," the old gal felt relieved, although by no means well.

But after having paid this tribute to Neptune, he led her slowly down the cabin stairs and into her stateroom, where she tumbled all of a heap upon her trunk and groaned as though in the throes of death.

Tom knew his business in this respect, and going at once to the steward's quarters, he obtained a glass of brandy and gave her a good dose of it.

Night closed in about them, cool and delightful, with the coast of Maine fast fading away in the hazy west.

Everything on board was just as it should be, and Miss Yumper was the only unhappy person on the yacht. But she was now sleeping peacefully, and probably the most of her trouble was forgotten. As for George Prescott, he did not feel the least uneasy about his aunt, for she had always been seasick for the first few hours after sailing with him, and he also knew that she was in good hands. So he spent the greater portion of his time with Captain Walton, examining the charts of the waters they were to search in quest of the unknown island, as described in the note from Captain Blaine, which had been so strangely found.

But this was no easy task, for the charts of the waters above latitude 70 are very imperfect, and only a few of the principal islands are put down. So after spending nearly the whole night over them, it was decided best to sail directly to Spitzbergen, when possibly more information might be obtained of the whalers who frequently make port there.

The next morning broke breezy and beautiful, with the Yankee Land off Halifax, Nova Scotia, and steaming along at a splendid rate of speed.

Miss Huldah Yumper came out all right, although looking somewhat paler than usual; and at the breakfast table she was congratulated by George Prescott, as was Clara, for the firm way in which she had held her own thus far.

Captain Walton and first mate Crocker also breakfasted with Prescott and his friends, and a lively, intelligent party it was, all five of them being educated and refined.

"Captain, we have made splendid time," said Prescott, after the meal had begun.

"Yes; the Yankee Land don't follow many steens found floating about in these waters," replied Captain Walton, who was quite as proud of the beautiful yacht as her owner was.

"She is a darling, and I don't think men should be blamed for loving such things of beauty," replied Prescott, fervently.

"Why, George, how you talk! The idea of a person's loving a steam yacht or any other such inanimate thing," said Miss Yumper.

"Well, it may not seem rational to some people, Aunt Huldah, seeing that the love is all on one side; but that, you know, is the case in many instances in life," said he, at which Clara Blaine's eyes sought her plate.

"Well I suppose it's really the safest love a man can indulge in, and perhaps the best, for then no one will be injured or unhappy over it. Where do you propose to stop first, Captain Walton?"

"At Cape Farewell, there to take on board coal enough to make up for what we shall have burned up to that point, and to see if we can obtain any further tidings of Captain Blaine; and if not, we shall then sail for Iceland, and thence to Spitzbergen."

"What a dreadfully long voyage!"

"True; but we shall try to make it as pleasant and comfortable as possible," replied Prescott.

"Of course you will. You are a prince of entertainers, George," said his aunt, and Clara thought she could add several other compliments to that one.

"Thank you, Aunt Huldah," said he, bowing.

"And I guess some of the people of Portland think the same way," added Captain Walton.

"Especially Professor Scatterbiter," said Mate Crocker, laughing, a laugh in which the others joined, for they remembered how very full of enthusiasm and brandy he had got just before the sailing.

"I wonder how he got home?" asked Prescott.

"It was simply shameful," said Miss Yumper.

"But what can you do with a man possessing so many eccentricities?" asked Prescott.

"You should not ask such men to partake of your hospitality. It is dangerous, George," said she, laughing.

"Oh, but the professor is one of our first men of science, you must bear in mind, aunt."

"But I notice that a superabundance of brains is not always a safeguard against foolishness. Ah! what is that?" she added, as there arose a loud commotion on deck.

Prescott and Captain Walton hurriedly left the table and rushed up the cabin stairs.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW CHARACTER INTRODUCED.

"Stop her! Stop dot boat!" were the exclamations they heard as they came on deck.

And the sight they saw was Professor Scatterbiter rushing wildly back and forth, swinging his arms recklessly around, and looking the picture of misery.

Was it a ghost? Where did he come from?

Prescott and Walton stood for a moment, rapt in astonishment. The officer of the deck was vainly trying to keep him quiet, but when he saw the captain, he turned to him appealingly.

"Why, it's Professor Scatterbiter," said Prescott, turning to his captain.

"It surely is; but how came he on board?"

"Heaven only knows. Hallo, professor! How came you on board?" he asked, approaching him.

"Stop dot boat, I tolé you!" he exclaimed, without noticing anybody in particular. "I vants me to go ashore. Stop her!" he cried.

"But how did you happen to remain on board?"

"I know noddings about dot. I—"

"But don't you know me?"

"Yes. You is Herr Prescott, owner of dis steamboat, and I vants me to gid ashore," said he, savagely.

"Where have you been all the while?"

"I hafe been fooled all der vile, dot's vot der madder is mit me. Stop dot boat!" he yelled, running around like a madman. "Vere is dot enchineer! I knock him some plack and plue eye oud!" and he rushed down into the cabin, probably thinking that he would find the engineer there.

But on rushing into the cabin where the ladies sat at table yet, he created a sensation of the first-class.

Miss Yumper believed him to be a ghost, and she screamed like a locomotive and flopped over in her chair, while Clara Blaine leaped to her feet and prepared to make her escape.

"Maggie" O'Shanter was there on time.

"She" went for that wild professor and gave him a biff under the ear that sent him sprawling on the cabin floor.

Then Miss Yumper screamed some more and kicked the table legs.

Prescott and his captain followed closely after the uncontrollable professor. They saw him go "to gräss" and heard

"Maggie's" whoop of victory mingled with Miss Yumper's screech of anguish.

"Niver moind, ma'am, I'm wid ye!" shouted O'Shanter, dancing over the prostrate form of that poor, knocked-out and knocked-down professor.

"Oh, oh, oh!" she screamed, all the while kicking.

"I'm wid ye, I'm tellin' ye. Be aisy; I'm only waitin' ter have him come up again, an' then yer'll see me go for him on ther lug some more," protested the "waiting maid."

"Stop that!" demanded Prescott, as he reached the cabin and saw how matters stood. "What is the meaning of this?" he asked of O'Shanter.

"Sure, sur, but I don't know."

"You don't know!"

"I only know that he made me mistress squale an' so I knocked him down," said O'Shanter.

"Wretch! you are more male than female. I'd almost swear to it," said he, as he proceeded to assist the professor to his feet.

"Begorra, but he nearly had me that toime!" mused the "maid."

"Vere is dot scoundrel?" demanded the professor, the moment he found himself right side up again.

"Don't mind him, professor. It is all a mistake. Calm yourself, and tell me how it happens that you are on board my yacht. I thought you went ashore before we sailed," said Prescott.

"Stop dot boat!" he cried, leaping up.

"Do you know where you are, professor?"

"On board dot boat. Stop her!" he yelled.

"But you have been on board nearly twenty-four hours, and we are now opposite Nova Scotia."

"Ish dot so?" he asked, gazing around.

"It is. How did it happen?"

"I know me noddings aboud dot. I know dot I take me some cognac, und it go to mine head, und I lay me dot bunk down on. Bimeby puddy soon I vakes me ub, und here I vas," said he, sadly.

"That accounts for it. The brandy overcame you, and you went to sleep in one of the unoccupied bunks. Well, that is pretty good, professor," said Prescott, laughing heartily at the old man's discomfiture.

"Gott—Gott! Vère vos I now?" he demanded, glaring at him angrily.

"Off Nova Scotia."

"Mine Gott in Himmel!"

"George, put him ashore! He swears in German," said Miss Yumper, raising her hands in horror.

"Oh, but that don't count, Aunt Huldah."

"Don't count! Don't swearing count in any language but English?" she asked.

"Not that we know of. But tell me, professor, what do you propose to do?"

"Stop dot boat und let me go ashore."

"Even then you will be several hundred miles from Portland. Why not make up your mind to go with us and profit by the expedition?"

"Mine Gott! I hafe mine summer clothes on!" said he, surveying himself.

"That does not matter. I have several chests of Arctic clothing on board, and nothing would please me more than to have you accompany me."

"But mine landlady!"

"We can call at St. Johns, Newfoundland, and you can telegraph her from thare."

"Dot vos some pizness dot I don't understand; it vos so queer," he mused.

"Well, you are your own master. Besides, nothing will be

thought of a scientist taking a sudden start anywhere. Sit down and have some breakfast," said he, leading him toward the table.

"Dot vos so queer!" he muttered.

"But that may not make it any the less interesting. You have often said to me that you would like to make a voyage to the northern latitudes, and here you have an opportunity," said Prescott.

"Yaw, I dinks me dot I vill go, und I cannot help mineself if I don't," said he, trying to laugh.

"That is all right. Ladies, pray be composed. You both know the professor, and I for one am very glad that fortune has given him to us as a companion for our voyage. His scientific attainments will not only be entertaining but useful."

The ladies bowed, and the professor became aware for the first time of his position.

"How much vos der matter mit me?" he asked, looking from one to another.

"What do you mean?" asked Prescott.

"How aboud dot?"

"You will accompany us as the official scientist of the expédition."

"Gott in Himmel! Bud dot ish goot!" exclaimed the old man, with pride.

"Oh, professor!" cried Miss Yumper, holding up her hands.

"Vot vas dot?" he asked, in surprise.

"Professor, you swore!"

"Ish dot so?" said he, looking surprised.

"Yes, professor; but please don't do it again, or some bad luck will befall us."

"I shall be careful, Miss Yumper. Mine Gott, I shall! I vill swear no more."

"But you just swore again."

"Ish dot so!"

"Please don't, Professor Scatterbiter."

"Dot ish all right. I bade you dot I don't swear no more, py jingo!"

"Please don't, for it strains my nerves, and my poor, sensitive nature."

"I vill strain you no more, Miss Yumper," said he, bowing apologetically.

"Well, you accept the situation, do you?" asked Prescott, after peace had been restored.

"Yaw, dot ish all right," said he.

"Good. You shall have access to my library and scientific apparatus, and I am certain that you will enjoy the expedition very much," and the two men shook hands with much cordiality.

This being arranged, breakfast was finished, and the whole party adjourned to the after-deck, where a beautiful scene met their gaze. They were sailing along the coast of Nova Scotia, whose bright hills and green fields gleamed in the morning sun, while the blue and ever-changing ocean, with its sparkling crests, danced in the light as the noble yacht, with her sharp steel prow, shot through and over it.

In the meantime Tom O'Shanter was busily engaged in Miss Yumper's stateroom shaving himself, hoping—expecting, in fact, that the charming views to be had from the deck of the yacht would keep both his mistress and Miss Blaine away from him.

"Bad luck ter this business, anyhow!" he muttered, as he puckered his face and scraped away. "Sure, I have ter shave every day, or me beard will give me away. Troth, it isn't half ther fun I thought it wud be; but anything ter get away from Portland," and he crooned a tune as he worked away at his mug.

But he had finished going over his face once, and had got

it well lathered for the second going over, when the door opened and Miss Yumper entered.

Tom flew around like a hen with her head off trying to get his razor and lather-brush out of sight, wholly forgetting the coat of lather on his face.

"Why, Maggie, what are you doing?" asked his mistress, looking at him in wonder.

"Sure, ma'am, I war a-washin' me face," said he, greatly confused.

"Washing your face? And pray how do you wash your face, Miss O'Shanter?"

"Wid wather, ma'am."

"But how about that soap-suds on your face?"

"An' soap, ma'am. Sure, it's a way I have av doing it, so it is."

"Well, a very queer way, I should call it."

"Troth, I put this lather on me face ter presarve me complexion, ma'am."

"Your complexion!"

"Yes, ma'am. Ther sea air tans me an' freckles me, so it do, an' sure I thought yer wudn't be aferther lookin' av me if I didn't look nice."

"What nonsense, girl! What has your being tanned or freckled, or not tanned or freckled to do with your general efficiency?"

"Sure, but yer wouldn't be proud av me if I didn't look nice."

"Ridiculous! Handsome is that handsome does. Attend to your duties and never mind about your looks so much. I assure you that I shall not feel hurt if you do get freckled."

"Sure, but me own pride, ma'am," said Tom, wiping the lather from his face.

"Your own pride!" she exclaimed.

"Och, sure, 'ma'am, ye know there's many a nice young sailor lad aboard the yacht," and he looked as though he wanted to blush.

"What nonsense! Never let me hear you speak of such a thing again. The ideal! I am shocked at you, Maggie."

"So be I, ma'am."

"What?"

"But it's only human nater, ma'am."

"Well, don't let me know of your giving vent to your human nature again while you are in my employ, not in that direction, at all events."

"No, ma'am."

"Find my thick woolen shawl out of that trunk," said she, indicating it.

"Yes, ma'am," and he went for it, glad of any opportunity to change the subject.

"Don't muss things up in that way. Why, I should think you had never handled ladies' clothing before in your life," said she, as he commenced to tumble the trunk full of articles about.

"Surè, ma'am, it's many a toime I've handled such things," replied Tom.

"Well, it must have been a strange woman that allowed you to handle her clothing in that way."

"She war a nice woman, ma'am."

"But not very particular, I guess."

"Troth, if she hadn't have been, she'd niver had the loikes av me," replied Tom.

"There, that is the one I want. Hand it to me and then put those things back again nicely," said she, throwing the shawl over her shoulders and going from the room.

"Whew! Begorra, but that was a narrow escape!" he muttered, after being left alone again, and then taking the precaution to fasten the door, he once more resumed his shaving.

Meanwhile the Yankee Land was forging ahead at the rate

of nearly fifteen miles per hour, and by noon the peninsula of Nova Scotia was left lying far astern, and she was now plunging her graceful bows into the choppy waters of the great mouth of the St. Lawrence.

Up to this time the weather had been delightful, but as evening drew on, Captain Walton noticed that the barometer was falling rapidly, and in anticipation of a cyclone, everything was put into ship-shape and made tight and fast for the encounter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TERROR OF A NORTHERN CYCLONE.

Captain Walton was an expert navigator, but no man in the world could judge of the direction that the wind would blow from the cyclone that was surely hiding in some quarter. So he put the prow of the Yankee Land to the northeast for the purpose of getting as far out to sea as possible before the dreaded storm should break upon her.

There was a haziness of sky, a heaviness of atmosphere which would surely have attracted the attention of a mariner, although the others on board never suspected that the terror of a northern blast might fall upon them at any moment.

Everything was peace and happiness on board, if we except, perhaps, Clara Blaine, who could, of course, only think of her poor father and brother abandoned on some desolate island which they had yet to find; no thought of danger disturbed any of them.

But at about four o'clock, while Professor Scatterbiter, the German savant, was holding a little scientific levee in the cabin saloon, a tremendous roar suddenly succeeded the ominous calm, and the brave yacht shook from stem to stern like a leaf in the wind.

"Mine Gott in Himmel! vot vas dot?" exclaimed the professor, starting at the shock.

Without a word George Prescott rushed upon deck, closely followed by the professor.

"What is it, captain?" he asked.

"A great blow, I guess. I have been watching and preparing for it for the past hour, during which we have run well out to sea, and everything is made right and tight for whatever comes," replied the captain.

"Thanks. I might have expected that of you, Captain Walton. Have you any fears?"

"None. The wind is coming from the northwest, which will drive us out into plenty of sea room, and although we may get a lively shaking up while it lasts, I think we are in no great danger."

"Very well. Stand by the wheel yourself, and call on me if you need more help."

"Ay—ay, sir! You see every sail is closely furled, and if nothing happens to the screw, we may get out of it all right."

"Ah, it is coming with the force of a cyclone."

"Which it most assuredly is. You had better go below, professor," said the captain.

"I shall take me some observations of id," the professor replied; but just as he spoke a mountain of water struck the yacht, knocking her suddenly away to leeward as though she had been but a cork, and sending the old fellow down against the rail all in a heap.

It did him little serious damage, however, but when Prescott assisted him to his knees (for he dare not trust the full length of his sea legs again), he had a bloody nose and a decidedly frightened look.

"Gott in Himmel! dot makes me sick," he moaned, and then

he gulped down about a pint of salt water from a wave which broke over the yacht before she could right herself.

"I guess you have taken all the observations you want just now, eh, professor?" suggested Prescott.

"Oh, mine Chimminy! led us go below und look after der ladies," he replied, mournfully; and being assisted, with much difficulty he crawled on his hands and knees until he reached the companionway, and tumbled headlong down from top to bottom, frightening the ladies even more than the cyclone was frightening them.

George Prescott followed with considerable difficulty, although in a slightly more graceful way, but he found the ladies in almost a panic, which he did his best to quiet.

"There is no danger," said he, reassuringly.

"But, George, we were completely tipped over. In fact, I think I stood on my head for a moment," said Miss Yumper, clinging to the stanchion.

"Were you harmed, Miss Blaine?" he asked.

"Not at all; but it was dreadful, Mr. Prescott," she said, trying to smile and seem at ease.

"Yes, it was, indeed. Were you harmed, Aunt Hulda?" he asked.

"Oh, George, don't ask me! I am so shaken about that I don't think I shall survive it. Do cast anchor, George!" said she.

"That is impossible, aunt; but, after all, I think there is no danger beyond a shaking up."

"George—"

"Well, Aunt Hulda?"

"I fear I'm going to be sick."

"Blease don'd!" moaned Professor Scatterbiter, seizing a stanchion and pulling himself slowly up to a standing position by it. "Don't, of you blease, Miss Yumper," he added.

"I—I can't help it. Hark!"

Another tremendous wave at this moment struck the yacht, and she seemed to be going down—down!

"Save us—save us!" cried Miss Yumper.

"Pray be calm, aunty. We are well out at sea and no harm can come to us."

"Oh, cast anchor, George!" she moaned.

"Impossible, aunty. We are now where the water is at least two miles deep, and our anchor chains will not reach," said he, smiling.

"Run her ashore!" cried the professor.

"We are at least one hundred miles from any shore, professor, and it will take quite a while to reach land. Probably the storm will all be over before we shall be able to do so."

"Mine Gott in Himmel! but dis is rough!" he cried, clinging for dear life.

"And, oh, so awfully unsteady!" put in Miss Yumper. "I feel it!"

"What?"

"I'm going to be sick!"

"Don'd do id!"

"I can't help it!"

"Wah!"

And the professor made a wild rush for a closet basin, banging his head three or four times before he reached it, and there—right there, he lost his breakfast, after which he settled into a corper and wanted to die.

This set Miss Yumper going, and she called wildly for her serving-maid, "Maggie" O'Shanter, who up to this time had been forward below, doing some work that she had set her at.

"Maggie" rushed to see what the trouble was, although fully comprehending it.

"Maggie, sustain me!" she gasped.

"Wid what—brandy?" he asked.

"Oh, I know I shall die!"

"I hope you do not feel any ill effects of the storm, Miss Blaine," said Prescott.

"Nothing very serious, although I have never before experienced anything so rough as this," said she.

"And anything so rough seldom overtakes us. But I must go on deck and assist Captain Walton," said he, turning to the companionway stairs.

"Pray, don't—"

"I beg pardon," he said, as she hesitated.

"Don't expose yourself unnecessarily, Mr. Prescott."

"I shall not do so, although, at the same time, I shall not shrink from danger," said he, bowing and leaving the cabin.

"Oh—oh—oh!" moaned Miss Yumper, but the professor seemed to have fallen into a peaceful sleep as he lay there doubled up.

Clara was standing it worthy of the daughter of a great navigator.

Meantime, on deck there was a scene no pen can describe. The sailors were all lashing themselves to the masts, stanchions, or shrouds, for every few moments the waves broke over the deck of the yacht with such terrible fury that nothing not well secured could resist them.

Captain Walton was lashed to the wheel, and when George Prescott went on deck he saw that he needed assistance, and at once lashed himself to it, and lent him all the help in his power.

The cyclone lasted for fully an hour and a half, during which time the yacht behaved nobly, although pitched about dreadfully, and as she was placed before the wind she was driven at least one hundred and fifty miles out to sea to the eastward.

Then, when the storm subsided, or they had been driven out of its path, the sea gradually became calm, and once more the Yankee Land rested on an even keel, and those on board began to renew themselves again.

But it was fully an hour afterwards before Professor Scatterbiter aroused sufficiently to crawl out of his recumbent position in the corner of the closet, and even then he thought better of crawling into his bunk than he did of going on deck to make any further "observations."

As for Miss Yumper, she seemed to grow worse and worse, and insisted upon dying and being buried in the cold bosom of the ocean. Life had for her then no temptations, no charms, and not until "Maggie" filled her up with brandy, and sleep overtook her, did she cease from wishing that the sea might sweep over her dead body.

But as soon as the storm had subsided, and the way again seemed clear, Captain Walton and George Prescott, the owner of the yacht, came together for a regular consultation.

"Where are we now?"

"As near as I can make out, we are in latitude 55, longitude 20."

"That would bring us nearer Iceland than any other port?"

"You are right. The cyclone has changed our whole course," said Captain Walton.

"So be it. We will make a straight run for Iceland. Possibly there we may find some clew."

"At all events it is just as good as though we stopped at Cape Farewell, Greenland."

"I think so; and, do you know, I have been thinking the matter over, and I believe that there is a possibility of Captain Blaine's being on the great island of Iceland. He may have been shipwrecked in a storm, not knowing where he was, and I think the best thing we can do is to land there and seek for information."

"I agree with you. How is she headed?"

"Directly for it."

"Good. Now that the storm is over, give her all she can do."

"Ay—ay, sir."

"Make Iceland as soon as possible."

"I will do so, sir."

"You are acquainted with it?"

"Certainly, as you are."

"Good! It is barely possible that we may get some tidings of the wreck of the Columbus there, if we cannot hear anything of the fate of her captain."

CHAPTER VIII.

AWAY TO THE FROZEN NORTH.

The trim, staunch yacht came out of the cyclone all uninjured, but if she had not been kept before the wind there is a doubt if she would have escaped, since that same storm afterwards became sadly memorable on account of the number of vessels and lives lost in it.

But if even the crew and officers felt the bad effects of the shaking up they had received, how must the passengers have felt?

Even Tom O'Shanter became shaky under his corsets, owing probably to being confined in the cabin attending to the wants of Miss Yumper and Clara Blaine, who also became sea-sick before the terrible storm was over.

But he soon recovered and improved the opportunities afforded by their sickness and sleep to shave himself, a thing which troubled him more than anything else in maintaining the position of a waiting maid.

George Prescott and Captain Walton sat alone at supper in the saloon cabin that night, and talked gravely of the task before them. The others were in bed, not yet having recovered from their sea-sickness.

As for Professor Scatterbiter, he was more completely knocked out than any of the others. He had never experienced anything like it before, and as he lay in his bunk he resolved to stop at the first or nearest landing and return home on something more steady than water was.

But they all felt better the next morning, he among the rest, although they all looked somewhat pale, and were not inclined to talk much.

Prescott and the captain, however, rallied them while at breakfast, and soon had the ladies at least in much better spirits. But the old professor felt much more like eating than he did like conversing.

"Oh, it was simply dreadful, and if it had not been for that brandy, I know I should have died," said Miss Yumper.

"Prandy!" exclaimed the professor, looking up.

"Yes, a good dose of brandy saved me."

"Gott in Himmel!"

"What is the matter, professor?"

"Prandy! I vill swear me dot dere vos somedings puddy bad mit me dot I nefer thought of dot prandy!" said he, ruefully.

"Why so, professor?" asked Prescott.

"Of I had some brandy, I bade you dot I hafe never come sick; I never dink me of dot until now. Vot a shame!" and while the others smiled, he resumed his breakfast with the air of a person who had missed something very good.

"Well, don't forget it next time," said Captain Walton.

"Forged id! I bade you some more dings dot I don'd for ged," said he, severely.

"What?"

"I bade you dot I shall nod forged me to go ashore ad der first landing place."

"Very well, you shall do so."

"Und you bade some money dot I go me pack home again on der land."

"As you wish, professor," replied Prescott, glancing at Walton, for the old man as yet knew nothing of the direction they were steaming, or where the first landing was to be."

"Dot is all righd. I vos no hog; I knows ven I has god enough."

"But I hope you are not going to leave us?" suggested Miss Yumper.

"I hafe god all I vants, Miss Yumper," replied the professor, decidedly.

"We shall not have any more such rough weather, shall we, Captain Walton?" asked Clara Blaine, turning to him.

"Probably not. The days are becoming so short now that the influence of the sun will not be felt so much, and my experience in these extreme northern latitudes is that for the next two months at least we shall have smooth water."

"Yaw, und no daylighd," added the professor.

"But there will be a twilight all the while that will enable us to get along very nicely. The days now are only about two hours in length, but the slow declination of the sun beneath the horizon is an operation of Nature which I consider one of the most interesting with which we are acquainted. In a short time the god of day will just show for a few moments above the horizon, and then disappears for twenty-odd hours before he slowly arises again, only to disappear before he has fairly illuminated these barren fields of cold and ice, until finally he does not appear at all, and his light can be seen gleaming up from below the horizon. And finally that becomes fainter and fainter until night wholly succeeds the short twilight and almost total darkness follows for nearly two months, when twilight once more glimmers in the south, growing stronger and stronger every day until again the sun comes above the horizon, and the short season begins once more."

"Good Heaven! And in such a terrible night my father and brother, if alive, now are," said Clara Blaine, with a sob.

"True, but we hope to rescue them," said George Prescott, quietly.

"Pray God you may!"

"Dod settles id," mused the old German professor, choking down a mouthful of food.

"What settles it?" asked Miss Yumper.

"I shall stick mit der expedition."

"Good!" they all said together, for it was quite evident that the old scientist was not only interested in the observations which he knew he would be able to make, but the grief of the beautiful girl whose relations they were going in search of made a not trifling impression upon his sensibilities.

From that time forward they had no trouble with wind storms, although the snow was frequently so blinding as it came down that the yacht was handled with the utmost difficulty, and often lay for hours drifting with the tide while a sharp lookout was maintained for icebergs, and pack ice was liable to be encountered at any moment.

But fair weather succeeded storms, and after quite a prosperous run they finally made the port of Reyhiavik, the capital of Iceland.

Here they took a supply of coal and made inquiries, although they could hear no tidings of the wreck of the Columbus, or get any clew which would lead them to believe that any of the survivors had ever visited Iceland.

They were almost in despair, when Prescott heard from some natives that came lately from an interior village of Halskio, near the world-renowned volcano of Mount Hecla, who told rather a strange story of some American wanderers who were stopping there as objects of charity.

There was a bare possibility that these strange wanderers

might be the party they were in search of, and after deliberating upon it for a while, it was finally agreed to procure guides and horses for the purpose of visiting this inland village.

The yacht was left in charge of Captain Walton, and taking a guide, a stalwart Icelander by the name of Tutu, he made preparations for setting out on the search expedition.

But Professor Scatterbiter insisted upon accompanying him. He wanted to see Mount Hecla, and as this would probably be the only chance he would ever have, he braced himself against all dangers and rigors of the climate and prepared to go.

Three sailors also accompanied them, and at the first streak of dawn they set out, led by Tutu, the guide, for a journey of nearly fifty miles, leaving the ladies in charge of the captain.

The day being short and the nights moonless, they only covered a portion of the distance, and remained during the long night at the hut of a native who treated them in the most hospitable manner, and then started again at early day-break toward Halskio.

But as the road which led over Mount Hecla was several miles the shortest, and there was a general desire to see the famous volcano, as it was then in a state of eruption, it was resolved to take it.

And long before they reached it they could see the huge column of smoke and ashes ascending above its snow-capped summit, while every now and then some dreadful volcanic force would shake the earth most violently.

"Oh, but dish is somedings grand!" cried the professor, even when the tremblings would nearly shake him from his shaggy horse.

"Is there any danger?" asked Prescott of the guide, who looked apprehensive.

"I think not, master. Such rumblings occur quite often near the volcano, but it is very seldom that any damage is done by them," he replied.

"Oh, but it is grand!" the old man again ejaculated.

"Well, let us push on," and with double energy they urged their horses forward, they being sure-footed, and used to the terribly rough roads over the mountains and lava beds.

Iceland appears to be wholly of volcania origin, and is, indeed, simply the top of a huge volcanic mountain protruding above the surface of the sea, reaching its greatest height in the cone of Mount Hecla.

"How is it, Tutu, any more tremendous than usual?" asked Prescott, when a sudden shaking of the earth nearly threw them from their horses.

The intelligent animals stopped as he spoke, and braced themselves as if for an emergency.

"I have not known the earth so feverish as it is now in many years," said he.

"But being on this great elevation may have something to do with it. Have you ever been here before?"

"Often."

"And did you always experience this?"

"Not always; but sometimes it shakes this way," said he, and there was a look in the Icelander's eyes which betokened fear.

They were now on a rough volcanic height, overlooking a desolate valley below, covered with snow, and unrelieved by a single tree or shrub, while the terrible peak of Mount Hecla towered thousands of feet above them. But the path to the point they were destined for lay through those lonely crags, and in spite of the loneliness which hovered over the place, they were fascinated by the awful grandeur which dwelt around them.

"Oh, it is beautiful! I would not have missed seeing this for millions!" said the professor.

"Well, it may be beautiful and grand to scientists, but be-

tween you and me, professor, I think I would rather be on lower ground," said Prescott.

"Oh, dot is no goot," he replied, rapturously.

"Look!" exclaimed Tutu, pointing upward to the volcano.

"Gott in Himmel! look at dot!" vociferated Professor Scatterbiter, excitedly.

The whole party was instantly transfixed by the scene which suddenly presented itself.

From the cone of Mount Hecla there arose a column of fire and smoke, seemingly as large as the mountain itself, fully a thousand feet in the air, while loud rumblings and rolls of thunder accompanied the phenomenon, which almost paralyzed the beholders. It was evident that an uncommon eruption was taking place, and the place, indeed, did not seem a safe one.

From time to time the earth shook terribly, and presently, in different directions, seams began to open, and flames and steam to issue around them, which arose in such masses as to completely shut out the view.

The situation became more terrible every moment, and yet they dared not move from where they stood. The horses trembled so from fear that they were scarcely able to stand, and the riders hastily dismounted.

Two or three of them broke away, and plunged wildly over the precipices, only to be dashed to death on the rugged rocks below.

"Oh, but this vos grand!" the professor was heard to exclaim, as he pulled himself from under his fallen, struggling horse.

Then, with one terrible convulsion, the rocks on which they stood were rended, and fell, carrying the whole party, amid the ruins, down into the steam and smoke and darkness below.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

The crash of the falling rocks; the terrible rumble of the thunder; the almost paralyzing bellowings which came from the bowels of the island, together with the steam and smoke which overspread the landscape could but make the mind revert to Inferno.

The hapless victims who were caught on the crumbling and sinking plateau, George Prescott, the owner of the Yankee Land, Professor Scatterbiter, the German savant, Tutu, the Icelander guide, together with three sailors from the yacht, were carried down for nearly one hundred feet, when they landed upon a snow-covered bottom that seemed not to be influenced by the earthquake.

One of the sailors was killed and buried beneath many tons of rocks and earth. Another of them was injured, as was the guide, but both Prescott and Professor Scatterbiter escaped serious injury, although every horse in the party was either killed or entirely disabled.

It was a terrible situation. Look which way they would, there was nothing but desolation.

High above their heads they could now and then see the trembling, frowning crags, as the wind blew away the steam and sulphur-laden smoke, but they threatened to topple over and bury them beyond hope every moment.

"Mine Gott in Himmel! bud dos vos gread!" they could hear the professor ejaculate every now and then, whenever he could get his head above the snow in which they were struggling.

By the most superhuman exertions they made their way along through the snow toward a more open space where

there was not so much danger from the toppling, crumbling heights which frowned above them.

It was a struggle for life with them, and like heroes they worked along, making their way to a place of seeming safety.

Still the earth trembled and the volcano vomited forth its fiery wrath. All nature seemed at war with itself and mankind.

Slowly they worked along and finally reached the plateau in safety, leaving the poor sailor behind, buried beneath almost a mountain of debris.

"Gott in Himmel! bud dot ish grand!" exclaimed the professor, although he had scarcely breath enough to express himself.

"God preserve us!" murmured Prescott, falling exhausted upon the snow.

"Vare ve vos now?" asked the professor.

"In a valley," replied the guide.

"But where; and how shall we get out of it?" asked Prescott.

"This way, I think, if the upheaval has not worked too great a havoc."

"Are you hurt much?"

"Not enough to mind now. But we must get out of this in some way as speedily as possible. Let us try this way," said he, as he limped slowly away, followed by the others of the survivors.

"Oh, bud dot vos grand!" again exclaimed the old professor.

"But I guess you have had enough of this sort of grandeur, haven't you?" asked Prescott.

"Dot vas all righd. Id vas der grandest ding dot efer vas seen."

"And it was a trifle too grand for comfort. What an escape we have had," said he, turning and looking down upon the awful ruins which marked the upheaval of the crumbled mountain.

"Dot vas so, Mr. Prescott."

They struggled slowly onward with their wounded companions, and succeeded in reaching the hut of a peasant just as darkness fell upon him.

Here they found shelter and food, for the Icelanders are renowned for their hospitality, and the next morning they pushed slowly along to the end of the journey, leaving the wounded behind to be taken up on their return with fresh horses.

But the journey proved to be a fruitless one, for on reaching the little village they learned that the supposed American sailors were not there, having returned to the capital a week or so before.

Therefore, there remained nothing for Prescott to do but return again and continue his search at Reyhiavik, and this the party proceeded to do without loss of time, carrying with them the sad news of the loss of a brave sailor and the story of their remarkable escape from the same fate that overtook the poor fellow on the crumbling mountain.

And the way in which Professor Scatterbiter told the story of the adventure in connection with the earthquake and the eruption of Mount Hecla was comical in many respects, although intensely interesting to those who had remained on board the Yankee Land.

But Prescott lost no time in searching out the American seamen, accompanied by Tutu, the guide, and a couple of sailors.

They went everywhere where there seemed a possibility of finding them, but although they found several American sailors, still they could find none who had ever been on the Columbus—or, at least, who would acknowledge the fact.

Prescott finally resolved to work in another direction and in another way.

Concluding that some of the half vagabond sailors knew more about the wreck than they cared to admit, on account of the mutiny that followed, he resolved to employ Tutu in the capacity of a spy to go among them and see what he could learn, if anything.

Tutu was a natural detective, and quite as naturally an honest man. Assuming the dress of a fisherman, he went around into the haunts of sailors, and with the money he had received from Prescott, spent it freely among them, and was soon rated a good fellow.

In one house near the docks—a sort of a boarding-house or tavern, much frequented by sailors of the lower class—he found a party that attracted his attention, and he lost no time in ringing in with them. And right welcome he was, for he had money to spend for brandy, and they apparently had none.

The reader is already acquainted with several of those fellows, one of them being Hank Walker, at one time first mate of the Columbus.

They were willing enough to take the brandy which Tutu bought them, although Hank was trying to tell his comrades something which he did not wish the fisherman to overhear.

"Why, blast my topights, I tell you it is true!" said he to Bill Blade; and as Tutu seemed to sleep under the influence of the drink he had taken, as he rested his head upon his arms upon the table in front of him, Hank became more outspoken.

"I can't believe it, mate," said Bill.

"I tell you it is true. This steam yacht Yankee Land is actually out in search of Blaine. Now, what I want to know is, how in thunder did they know anything about it, and what it means, anyway. Certainly no vessel has been there or from there, and he could get no word from there."

"Certainly not, and so far as that is concerned, all three of them are dead before this time," replied Bill.

"Ay—ay, boys! you bet that Jack Studley made mincemeat of them at the first chance, and as he couldn't get anything else to eat, he probably ate them," said another.

"Yes; and as it has been so long since we left them, he himself has probably starved to death by this time. And that only makes the thing seem stranger."

"What thing?"

"Why, this matter of their coming in search of him. I don't understand it," mused Hank.

"Oh, they are probably only anxious about his safety without actually knowing that he has been wrecked and abandoned. But they will have a nice time finding him."

"Right you are, messmate," said Bill, and a coarse laugh followed.

"But that is not what I am coming at," said Hank Walker, glancing at Tutu, who, although seemingly still asleep, was yet listening.

"What is it, mate?"

"The yacht!" said he with an eager whisper.

"What of her?"

"Hush! if we could capture her."

"Yes." And they gathered closer.

"And go off on a cruise."

"Yes."

"Capture a few merchantmen, secure enough to make us all independent, and then run her away down to Brazil or some southern port; sell her, and then scatter in every direction we wanted to, leaving no trace behind. Eh? How does that strike you, my hearties?"

"Splendid!" and like expressions greeted him all around the table."

"We were devilish fortunate in getting picked up by that whaler and brought here, only it would have been a devilish sight more fortunate if we had been carried a little further south. There seems to be no way of getting out of this at present, and this is the only way I see for bettering ourselves."

"Yes, cap'n; but how are we going to get possession of her, I'd like to know? She carries a large crew, and probably is well armed."

"Just you leave that to me. I'll contrive some way to get possession of her, never fear; and when once we get it, we'll take precious good care that nobody on board will bother us afterward."

"They say there's women on board."

"Oh, well, for that matter, we can keep them for ourselves. Now you fellows lay low, and see if I don't contrive a way."

There wasn't one of them who wasn't villain enough to wish the programme might be carried out, but they shook their heads doubtfully at the prospect.

"Give me until to-morrow night, and see if I don't bring it about. Besides, if we don't capture the yacht and break up the expedition, they may find out something about our crookedness."

"I don't see how they can," muttered Bill.

"Well, perhaps they may. Stranger things than that have happened in this world. But the best thing for us to do is to get possession of the yacht, and get out of this God-for-saken country."

"That's so," they all agreed.

"Wake up the fisherman and make him treat us again," growled Tom.

"That's so. We may as well help him spend his money while he has it. Hey, wake up!" cried Walker, shaking him savagely.

"Hey? Oh!" said Tutu, pretending to wake up. "Guess I was asleep!"

"Guess you was; and I guess we are getting confounded dry in the meantime."

"All right. Some more brandy, and then I must go home, for it's getting late," said he, feeling that he could well afford to treat them again in return for what he had learned.

So he paid for a bottle of brandy, and soon afterward went staggering stupidly from the place, leaving the conspirators to themselves.

CHAPTER X.

PILOTED BY A VILLAIN.

George Prescott was thoroughly astonished when Tutu informed him of what he had overheard, but he could not believe that they would make a serious attempt at the capture of the Yankee Land in the face of such odds.

One thing, however, he did feel certain of, that he had at length come upon some of the mutineers, and that they undoubtedly knew where Captain Blaine was, and it was of the utmost importance that they should in some manner be made to reveal what they knew.

This, of course, he felt would be a hard thing to do, for it would be criminating themselves, and make themselves liable to death as the penalty for their wickedness.

How, then, should he accomplish his purpose?

After dreaming over it all night and consulting with Captain Walton, he resolved on seeing the leader, Hank Walker, and find out if some arrangement could not be made whereby Captain Blaine might be recovered, even if he had to agree not to report the case to the United States authorities.

Being guided by Tutu, who had assumed his hunter's garb, he sought the tavern where Hank was pointed out to him.

Prescott approached without the slightest hesitation, and taking a stool, sat down on the opposite side of the table.

Walker looked up, and instantly recognized him as the owner and turned pale.

"Your name is Hank Walker, if I mistake not, and you were at one time first mate of the exploring ship Columbus, Captain Blaine," said Prescott, calmly.

"It is a lie!" Walker growled, with an oath.

"I have got proof of it."

"You have nothing of the kind."

"Indeed I have, and proof that you would not dispute yourself, unless you are worse than I think you are."

"What is it?"

"Your own admission."

"That is another lie!" replied Walker, while his men skulked away.

"Only yesterday, in this very room."

"No, sir, it is false! I never admitted anything of the kind."

"Do you remember the fisherman with whom you drank here yesterday?"

Walker turned pale, and uttered a fearful oath. He had been betrayed by a spy!

"I will have no more of this, and by the God above us, if you don't clear out of this I will brain you!" said Walker, leaping to his feet and snatching up the stool on which he had been sitting.

"Don't get too excited for business," said Prescott, calmly covering him with a navy revolver. "Be reasonable."

The rascal cowered in an instant.

"What do you want?" he finally asked again, taking a seat at the table.

"I want to know where Captain Blaine is."

"Hang Captain Blaine! What do I know about him?" he asked, glancing at the door, hoping, most likely, that his companions would come to his rescue.

But Tutu was watching that door, with his hand on the trigger of the rifle.

"Come, now, let us be reasonable. If you will pilot me to the island where you left him, I will bring you back to this place and not betray you into the hands of the authorities; and besides that, I will give you five thousand dollars in cash."

Walker was on the point of replying again with another outburst of profanity, when a happy thought happened to strike him.

"What do you say?"

"Say! Why, I say that you have made a mistake in me."

"How?"

"I am not Hank Walker, neither was I ever connected with the Columbus."

Prescott looked at him searchingly.

"But I have heard about this Captain Blaine."

"Oh, you have?"

"An explorer, wasn't he?"

Prescott bowed.

"Wrecked, wasn't he?"

Again Prescott bowed without speaking.

"Left on an island up north here somewhere?"

"I believe so."

"What makes you believe so?" asked Walker, savagely.

"I not only believe it but know it!"

"Know it! How?"

"Not long since I was cruising not far from this latitude, when I picked up a boat-load of wrecked whalers, nearly famished, and took them to Portland, Maine. A short time

before I rescued them they picked up a bottle floating on the water. On breaking the bottle they found this message," said Prescott, handing it to him.

With trembling hands Walker took the paper, which he instantly recognized as a leaf from the memorandum book of Captain Blaine, and read as follows:

"Island somewhere near Spitzbergen, about latitude 70 deg., longitude 30 or 40 deg., October 5, 1865. The exploring ship Columbus wrecked and crew mutinied. Captain Blaine and son abandoned by them and left to perish. Come to the rescue!"

CAPTAIN BLAINE."

"Do you recognize the handwriting?"

"No; but I know where your Captain Blaine is, all the same."

"You do?"

"Yes; and if you will give me five thousand dollars, return me to this place, and never betray me to the authorities here or elsewhere——"

"I will do it," said Prescott, eagerly.

"Do what? Don't be quite so eager, or I will suspect your honesty. Mind you, I am not the person you accuse me of being, but it might bother me a long time to prove that I was not, if you should accuse me."

"I understand."

"And I wish you to believe it as well. Now, I happened to fall in with one of the crew of that Columbus, and he told me about it. Now you understand why I am in a position to pilot you. I don't know the latitude or longitude, but I can find it easily enough."

"And will you do so?"

"Yes, on those conditions."

"I agree to them, and I give you my word as a gentleman that they shall be fulfilled if you fulfill your portion of the agreement."

"Well, can't I take a few of my friends along?" he asked, after a moment's hesitation.

"Friends! What friends?"

"Well, there's about a dozen of us, mostly not able-bodied, who have been either shipwrecked or abandoned here by whalers and sealers, and we should like to get to the United States," said the wily rascal, thinking, perhaps, that he might in this way get his crew on board the yacht, and thus have a better opportunity of capturing it.

"No, sir!" replied Prescott, firmly, for he knew all the while that he was dealing with a rascal.

And he also knew of the conspiracy, and of course intended to thwart it. Walker also knew, the instant Prescott refused him, that the spy had overheard that part of the business also, and did not press the point.

"Very well. Perhaps you will be willing to take them when we return here."

"Perhaps. When will you be ready to start?"

"To-morrow morning."

"The quicker the better. I shall depend on you," said Prescott, arising from the table.

"You can do so, sir. I will go on board the yacht by daylight to-morrow."

"All right," and he walked from the place.

Tutu lingered behind a few yards, and then turned suddenly when near the door, and fixed his fierce eyes on Walker; but without speaking he presently strode from the door.

"Ten thousand curses on that greaser! I half believe that he was the fisherman who was here yesterday. If I thought it was, I——" and he started savagely toward the door.

But just before he reached it it was opened and several of his crew came in.

"What is it?" they all asked, eagerly.

"Devilish bad luck, and a devilish narrow escape for all of us. What do you think? Old Blaine got hold of a bottle in some way or other—most likely it floated ashore from the wreck—and he inclosed a message in it, which was picked up and gives the whole thing away."

"The whole thing?"

"With the exception of the locality of the island where we left him. This Prescott got hold of it and started to find him, calling here to see if he could get any information. Suspecting that some of us knew something about it, he employed a spy, and who should it be but that fisherman who treated us yesterday!"

An oath escaped every man of them.

"Well, he probably overheard what we said about capturing the yacht, and I'll tell you why I think so. He pinned me down very close, but I denied that my name was Hank Walker, or that I or any of us were ever on the Columbus. But he insisted on it, and finally offered me five thousand dollars cash to pilot him to where Blaine was. Now listen—I thought if I could get him to let us all go on board that we could pilot them in any direction but the right one, and manage to get control of the yacht, as I spoke of yesterday. But he refused so sternly that it convinced me this cussed spy told him of our intentions."

"Well, what did you do?"

"What could I do when he refused? But I agreed to go, all the same."

"And you will?"

"Certainly."

"But what is to become of us?"

"I will tell you. I have agreed to be ready in the morning, and they will probably sail soon after daylight. Now, this evening you must steal that sealing boat. She is all provisioned, and you can easily overpower the two greasers who are on board and take them along with you. Bob Jones, you shall be captain."

"All right, sir."

"Stand right away north and make the island of Hinio as quickly as possible. I will direct them to the same island, making believe that Blaine is there. Watch closely, and I will manage so that you shall be taken on board as shipwrecked sailors—understand?"

"Yes—yes," they all replied, eagerly.

"Follow my instructions, and we will have possession of the Yankee Land inside of a week, and Captain Blaine will be as far from rescue as ever he was. Be quick and resolute. There is no danger except in delay."

CHAPTER XI.

THE ABANDONED ONES.

Let us return to Captain Blaine and his son, for it has been a long time since we have seen them, owing to the course of events surrounding the story. But we turn to a sad picture.

At this time they were in the midst of the long, dark, winter night, which exists for months in the polar seas.

The little provisions which drifted ashore from the wreck of the Columbus had long since been exhausted, or, rather, the larger share of it had been stolen from them by Jack Studley while they were out with the gun in quest of game, they being able to shoot a polar bear, a seal, and sometimes a stray gull, upon which they eked out a miserable existence, while they hoped and prayed, and watched through the darkness for some

sign of the coming morning which should renew their hopes of succor.

Jack Studley still maintained his sullen conduct, living in an ice cave a quarter of a mile or so from Blaine's, and still swearing to murder both Blaine and his son at the first favorable opportunity. In fact, he had to be watched continually, and was only waiting in the hope of Blaine's ammunition giving out, as it surely would do before long, for he dreaded that shotgun more than anything else.

As before stated, he lived almost entirely upon what he could steal from his companions in misery. In truth, he would have stolen from them even had he been well supplied with food, for if ever there was a black-hearted wretch it was this same Jack Studley.

Captain Blaine had fashioned a habitation out of an ice cave, and with the assistance of the skins of the game he killed he managed to keep partially comfortable, although dependent almost entirely upon driftwood with which to keep even the smallest amount of fire burning.

But at best their situation was a terrible one. Think of a barren island, where absolutely nothing grows, and where the thermometer even in midsummer seldom rises above the freezing point, and where, at this season of the year, it is never higher than forty degrees below zero.

Then, in addition to this, think of the bitter, blinding snowstorms which exist continually almost, being driven before those cold, high winds, and then, as the somber crowning of all, think of a night of four months' duration!

Three of those dreadful months had gone, and yet another remained before the sun would once more rise above the southern horizon to gladden the polar world.

Owing to a long-continued storm Captain Blaine had been unable to shoot any game or gather any driftwood, and consequently both food and fuel were nearly exhausted.

But to make matters worse, young James, the captain's son, had for a long time been sick and sometimes delirious on account of the mental and bodily sufferings which he had endured, and which produced the utmost anguish in that brave father's heart.

He watched and nursed him carefully and tenderly, but there was no medicine to allay his fever, and even the last drop of brandy which had been saved from the wreck had been stolen from them only a short time before by Jack Studley.

"Poor boy, I fear I cannot save him. He is delirious, and does not know me. Oh, God! must I lose him in this way? Has Heaven no ear for such misery as this? Wretches! has justice been meted out to you yet? Oh, it cannot be that such monstrous fiendishness as this can escape a retribution that is equal to it! What shall I do for my poor boy? Alas, Heaven alone can help him, I fear. I wonder where that rascal Studley is? I have not set eyes on him for weeks, but I know he is still alive, for he continues his thieving from us, and his last rascality was stealing the last drop of brandy. I have tried to hunt him to his lair, but the drifting snow obliterates his tracks, and I am unable to find him. But I am going out again as soon as the storm subsides a little, and the villain, if I can find him, shall restore that brandy, or I will have his heart's blood for it. If it was only light I, perhaps, might do better; but as it is I must feel my way about. Oh, it is dreadful—dreadful! And yet no succor comes. The waif which I entrusted to that bottle has probably not been picked up. Probably the bottle was crushed to powder among the pack ice, and we must drag out a miserable existence here, and finally fill unknown and unmarked graves. Yet I cannot believe that every one of those mutineers were fiends. It must be that some one of them, if they ever reached civilization, would give information, if only anonymously, that would lead to my rescue. Ah, he sleeps now. I'll cover him up warm

with these sealskins, build a fire with the last remaining wood, and then go out once more in search of food and that rascal Studley," said he, as his son fell into a more peaceful slumber.

He covered him up with great tenderness, and then built a fire in one corner of the cave with a few sticks of wood, the last they had.

"And now I will away through the gloom and darkness. Heaven bless it!" said he, with great fervor, as he caught up the gun and kissed it passionately.

Just then the boy moved uneasily, and the anxious parent paused and waited to see if he would awaken. But with a sigh he again slept. The firelight revealed his flushed and fevered face as his father had not seen it yet, for this was the first fire they had had for at least a week, during which the fever had made terrible inroads upon him.

"Oh, God, he is very sick, but do not let him die in my absence, and guide me to something that may benefit him."

Watching him for a moment, and listening to his quick breathing, he finally knelt and kissed his hot lips, and then hurried away, where, he knew not, but with desperation enough in his heart to accomplish almost anything.

Slowly he made his way through the darkness in a direction he had not taken before.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

Captain Blaine had not gone a quarter of a mile from his miserable abode before who should come stealing upon the scene but Jack Studley.

He crept cautiously along, listening as he did so, and if ever there was a fiend's look in the face of a human being, his bore it.

He was still armed with the hatchet with which he had before attempted the life of young Blaine. His dress had become extremely shabby, but he had supplemented it with several bear and seal skins, which he tied around him with the thongs and sinews of the animals which he had slaughtered with his hatchet by stealing upon them in the darkness.

Altogether, he was a most repulsive-looking person; one whom a savage would have fled from.

"Yes, I was not mistaken. It was old Blaine I saw just now, climbing over the pack ice. Ha, ha, ha! I dare say he has gone to try his eyes to the south'ard again, to see if he can make out through the darkness some craft coming to the rescue. Curses on him! I will rescue him from—from living and suffering much longer. I would have buried my axe in his cursed skull long ere this, but made up my mind to let him suffer all through this dreadful winter's night of months, and then kill him just when the sun returns again. Yes, that would make my revenge so sweet," said he, with a fiendish expression on his face.

"Ah, here's his cave. Wonder if that brat of his is there? Wonder if they have got anything to eat? Hark! what was that? It was a groan! Perhaps the brat is starvin'—I hope he is," said he, creeping toward the bearskin that hung over the entrance to the cave, and served as a door.

The anguished groans of the suffering boy continued to reach his ears, at every one of which the grin upon his face became more and more devilish.

"Ah, that's music—that's music! I'll bet the little cuss is starving for food. And they have a fire, too. Curses upon them! What right have they to have a fire when I have

none? I'll soon put a stop to that, and steal what wood they have."

Seizing the bearskin door he pulled it down, with a curse, and then gazed into the dimly-lighted interior, where the poor boy lay groaning and writhing in his fever and delirium.

"Why not put him out of his misery? It would be an act of kindness, and I feel exceedingly kind toward both him and his father; indeed I do. Come out of this, you son-of-a-cur!" he hissed, seizing the boy by the hair of the head and dragging him out of the cave, at the same time extinguishing the fire.

"Oh, father, don't hurt me so!" cried the delirious youth, never suspecting who it was.

"Father! Curses on both you and your father! I am not your father!" roared Jack.

"Oh, father, are you going to take me home to Clara? I—I am so cold!"

"I'll warm you presently. Stand up!" cried the fiend, yanking the lad from his knees, where he had fallen on account of weakness.

"Take me back to sister Clara, and she will give me some food," he pleaded, clinging to the rascal, and believing him to be his father.

"Oh, I'll send you to your sister by a shorter cut," and he seized his hatchet.

"Father!"

"Shut up! Don't you know me? You must know me, for I want you to see who it is that murders you."

"Murder? Who speaks of murder?"

"I do. Look at me!"

"Are you not my father?"

"No! curses upon him, no! I am your father's deadly foe, Jack Studley, whom he struck and kicked like a dog. Do you know me?"

"I cannot see you. But you surely will not harm me?" he pleaded, tearfully.

"Oh, no! I shall only chop your head open, that's all, and that will put you out of your misery. Do you know me?"

"Yes, Jack, but do not murder me. I never harmed you, Jack, never."

"But your father did, and I will kill you both for revenge."

"Please don't, Jack."

"Yes, I will."

"I am sick and weak, Jack."

"Well, I'll cure you of that weakness before many minutes, no fear."

"Do you mean it, Jack?"

"I do, and don't forget it."

"Then let me pray, Jack, before I die."

"Pray!" mused Jack, starting back, while a tremor seized his limbs.

"Yes, let me pray to Heaven for my own, and the forgiveness of my enemies," said he, falling upon his knees, while Jack Studley gazed at him almost aghast.

"And won't you pray with me, Jack?"

"Me! No. What have I got to do with prayer?" he asked, sullenly.

"But you are going to do a very wicked thing, Jack, and you ought to ask Heaven to forgive you beforehand. Pray with me, Jack."

"Pray! I don't know how to pray, and what have I to do with such mummeries, anyhow?" he grunted, but it was plain to be seen that the rascal was affected.

"I will teach you how to pray, Jack."

"I—I, oh, pshaw! What is praying good for, anyhow?"

"It will make your peace with God, and save you from hell when you die. You don't want to go to hell when you die—do you, Jack?"

"Bah!"

"Repeat after me, Jack, and I will teach you the Lord's prayer, the best that was ever made. Come and keep me from falling, for I am so very weak. There, now, repeat after me," he said, as Studley sullenly supported him.

"Y-yes," he faltered.

"Our Father which art in Heaven——"

After a moment's hesitation he repeated the sentence after him, a sentence that had not passed his lips since early boyhood.

"Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us——"

"Hold on, boy, hold on! Belay that," said Jack, unable to stand the appealing tone of the boy he intended to murder, as he addressed his prayer to Heaven; and relinquishing his hold upon him, young Blaine fell forward upon his face, so weak from sickness and excitement that he swooned.

Jack stood with his back toward him for an instant, his head bowed, and his whole frame trembling with the terror of his Heaven-smitten heart.

Then turning, he saw the seemingly lifeless form of the boy, and sprang toward it.

"Here! I—I say, boy, what's the matter with you? Speak to me—speak! Wake up, boy!" said he, lifting him in his arms. "Why, the boy is dead, I do believe, and I have murdered him. Quick! Where is that flask of brandy I stole from them; there is some of it left. Perchance it will revive him; maybe he is only in a swoon."

Kneeling upon one knee, he rested the lad's head upon the other; then taking the flask from beneath the shaggy skins he wore, he poured some of the brandy down his throat.

"There—there, that may do you good, my boy. How cold he is!" he muttered, snatching a huge bearskin from his own shoulders and wrapping it closely about him. "And there is no fire—wretch that I am, I put it out, and there is no way to rekindle it. What a beast—what a ruffian I am! God—God forgive me, if possible, that I may devote my life to the boy I would have slain. Ah! he revives! Yes—yes! the brandy revives him, and he shall have more," he added, again pouring some down his throat.

He was in the act of doing it when Captain Blaine came upon the scene.

He stopped and gazed through the darkness at the strange and unexpected scene; then, cocking his gun, he called out:

"What are you doing here, Jack Studley?"

"Kill me if you will, Captain Blaine," said he, placing the boy upon the snow and standing erect before the indignant parent.

"What are you doing here?"

"I came here to kill your son, but he has melted my heart, and I have given him some of the brandy I stole from you——"

"Yes, and he——"

"See, he is better now," said Jack, taking him in his arms and carrying him into the cave tenderly.

Captain Blaine could scarcely credit his senses as he watched his old enemy.

"How do you feel, James?" he asked, kneeling by the bunk of furs, but still holding upon the gun, not knowing how much faith to put in this sudden conversion from avowed enmity to friendliness.

"I—I am better, father. Where is Jack?" he asked, feebly.

"Here I am, boy," said he, kneeling by his side with much solicitation.

"Did he hurt you, my son?"

"No, father; and please don't hurt Jack, for he said the Lord's prayer with me."

"Impossible," replied Blaine.

"God help us, it is true. I repeated it after him until it choked me and melted my brutal heart."

"Thank God for that, Jack! There is my hand. I may have been severe with you, but let bygones be bygones."

"With all my heart," replied Jack, taking the captain's proffered hand.

"And shall we be friends hereafter?"

"Yes, Captain Blaine; and let us give all the credit of it to your son there. And, see, he is much better already."

"The brandy has revived him wonderfully," said Blaine, with loving enthusiasm.

"And now I feel as though I shall surely recover if you and Jack become good friends."

"As we surely will be, if patient endeavor for our common good will make us so."

"But alas! Jack, the prospect does not seem very encouraging for us. There is yet another month of this intense cold and gloomy darkness before we can raise a signal of distress to catch the eye of any passing crew, even if there was a hope of anything cruising in these northern latitudes."

"That is too true, Captain Blaine."

"Oh, it was the most cruel and cowardly trick that was ever known, leaving us on this inhospitable island of ice!"

"Ten thousand curses on the rascally lubbers! And I hope Davy Jones has got every one of them in his locker before this time," said Jack.

"Ah, that would be serving them too well, death without any future punishment. But there is a compensation in this world, and the authors of this cruelty will not only be rewarded here, but in the dread hereafter. But let us not pine over what we cannot help, for it will do no good. Let us leave all that in the hands of an avenging God, and set ourselves to work to see what can be done to benefit our condition."

"Yes—yes."

"Have you any provisions, Jack?"

"Yes, I have a few pounds of smoked seal meat at my cave, and I will bring it here."

"Do, for we are both of us very hungry. Not an animal have I seen on the island for the past month, and scarcely so much as a gull approaches it; and if they do they are so wild and shy that there is no possibility of getting near enough to kill them."

"I know it, captain. What meat I have I will bring here at once, and perhaps by the time that is gone we shall be able to get more."

"I hope so. But come here and live with us. Our cave is large enough."

"Yes, if you will permit me I will do so. I am heartily sorry for what I have done heretofore, and now I will make amends. Here, keep the brandy, for he may need some more of it before I get back," said he, giving him the flask, which still contained nearly a pint of the precious liquid.

"I would go with you, Jack, but fear to leave my boy at this critical time for there may come a relapse."

"All right, captain. What little I have got will not burden me much," said he, departing.

For a moment after he left Captain Blaine stood like one in a dream. It did not seem possible that such a thing could be—that so great a ruffian and thorough scoundrel should be suddenly converted. Perhaps he meant mischief after all, and so it was that he could not accomplish it if he meant it. He had now laid his gun, leaving only the powder, and then, to make assurance doubly sure, he removed the cap from the nipple.

When he had run up to one corner of the cave, he turned to him.

"How is it with you, James?"

"I feel much better, father; and, oh, I am so glad that Jack has repented!"

"So am I, if he really means it."

"I think he does, father, for he came here to murder me, and could have done so as easily as not, but repented."

"It is very strange."

"No, father, it was the Lord's prayer that melted him," said the boy earnestly.

"God bless you, my son! and I trust he will remain melted until we get out of this."

In about an hour Jack returned with several ragged strips of smoked seal meat and a few skins which would help make the cave more comfortable.

Captain Blaine watched him narrowly as he set about rekindling the fire, and preparing their rude meal. But to all appearances he had been transformed from a fiend into a perfect slave, ready to serve with the fidelity of his whole nature the persons whom he was ready to murder a few hours before.

And so a week passed by, during which young Blaine almost fully recovered, greatly to the delight of his father and Jack Studley, who seemed never to tire of attending on him.

At the end of this time a faint light began to glimmer about noon time above the southern horizon, indicating that the sun was coming north, and would, before long, show himself again through the short polar days, never disappearing below the horizon again until he turned for another long journey southward.

This, of course, produced great joy; for not only when daylight came again would a variety of game return to the island, but the long day would enable them to do something for liberation, perhaps.

Jack was continually haunting the shores among the huge cakes of pack ice, watching for seals or bears, although he very rarely got a shot at one that he could capture, for want of a boat.

Finally Captain Blaine made up his mind to make one great hazard when the huge blocks and fields of ice began to move southward in the spring, it being nothing less than embarking on one of the largest he could find, and floating upon it, in the hope of being picked up by some passing vessel.

Meantime the northern lights, which had served them so long and well instead of sun or moon, began to die out and fade away as the twilight of the approaching morning grew stronger and stronger day by day, and in the face of it their hearts grew stronger and more ready to undertake the perilous adventure of perhaps a thousand miles upon an iceberg.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PLOT OF A MASTER VILLAIN.

It will be recollected that the yacht Yankee Land steamed away from Reyhiavik, the capital of Iceland, in search of Captain Blaine and his son, under the guidance of Hank Walker, who still denied his identity, and who was determined to get possession of the yacht and transform her into a pirate.

This he was to do while leading them away in a wrong direction and to the Island of Hinlio, some fifty miles from Iceland, where he had arranged with his fellow rascals, the former crew of the Columbus, to meet him to carry out his plans.

But he knew, of course, that a steam yacht of such sailing qualities as those of the Yankee Land could reach the rendezvous considerably quicker than the sealing boat which the other conspirators had stolen, and so he contrived to put her

on a wrong course, so that nearly double the time was occupied, and they did not reach the desolate island until after the conspirators had arrived there.

Here Captain Walton cast anchor, and George Prescott, with Professor Scatterbiter and a boat's crew, prepared to go ashore in the hope of finding Walker's assertions true, that this was the spot that he had been told of by one of the crew of the Columbus.

But when all was ready to go ashore, Walker declined to accompany them, setting up the excuse that he was sick. It was of no avail, however, for Prescott insisted upon it, and in the event of his refusing, threatened to take him in irons back to the United States and deliver him up to the authorities.

"Captain Blaine may not be here now, for it was months ago that this was told me, and he may have been rescued before this time."

"Never mind, I shall hold you to the strict letter of your agreement. Come ashore with me or I will instantly put you in irons."

"Do so at your peril—I refuse."

"That settles it, and convinces me that you have been deceiving me all this time. Place him in irons and make sure that he cannot escape."

Two powerful sailors at once seized him, and in spite of his savage resistance soon had him in irons and secured below, after which Prescott and his companions rowed ashore to make inquiries, if any inhabitants could be found.

It did not take long to go over the whole island and to convince Prescott that there was no trace of the missing navigator there, although he came across three shipwrecked whalers who had been there nearly a month, and these he resolved to take on board the yacht.

But while all this was going on the other conspirators were hovering around, waiting for the signal agreed upon to board the yacht. They had watched every movement closely ever since the Yankee Land had entered the abandoned harbor, and they saw the preparations being made for a boat's crew to go ashore.

They saw the short struggle on board, and one person taken below, and they naturally concluded that it was Hank Walker. But when they afterwards saw the owner of the yacht and quite a number of the crew go ashore, they made up their minds that the plot had not been discovered.

But one thing was certain; Hank Walker did not go ashore, and he could not be seen on the yacht's deck, so it must be that he had disobeyed some order, and had been taken below as a prisoner, perhaps to be carried back to the United States for trial. This, of course, interested them greatly, for if he was taken back they knew that the power of the United States would be able to reach them in whatever quarter of the globe they might be.

Becoming desperate at this thought, and seeing that they were not suspected, they resolved on boarding and capturing the yacht, and liberating Walker before the return of Prescott and the remainder of her crew.

With this end in view, the dozen desperate pirates weighed anchor, and bore directly down upon the Yankee Land, all armed to the teeth.

The lookout forward hailed them, and warned them to stand away, as the sea was quite high, and there might be damage done if they came too close alongside.

The captain of the sealer protested that they had been ice-bound for a long time, and were out of provisions, and asked permission to go on board for the purpose of exchanging sealskins for provisions and medicine.

The word was passed to the second mate, who in turn reported it to Captain Walton. Such a request in such a lati-

tude was not to be disregarded, and he instantly went on deck to take a look at the strange craft.

He did this without approaching near enough to hold a conversation with them, and he at once suspected something wrong. But he might be wrong himself, and do an unkind act by refusing to succor fellow-beings in distress. At all events, he resolved to be prepared.

So, going below, he called the remainder of the crew around him, and gave each of them a pair of revolvers, telling them to be ready to use them when they should receive a signal from him by his stamping on deck.

Captain Walton went on deck, where there were only two others besides himself. The sealer had drifted or purposely been directed in such a way as to come right under the bowsprit of the Yankee Land. A pistol shot startled him as he reached the deck, and he saw the man on lookout fall.

He ran quickly forward, but in an instant, almost, the pirates had leaped into the chains and martingale, and were swarming over the forecastle deck.

"Surrender!" shouted the pirate captain, rushing forward with an old cutlass.

"Back, or you will be a dead pirate!" shouted Captain Walton, covering him with his pistol, and at the same time stamping upon the deck.

"Down with 'em!" shouted the pirates, as they made a rush toward him.

But in the twinkling of an eye, almost, ten resolute Yankee sailors, each holding a ready revolver, confronted them.

The rascals saw in an instant that they had made a mistake, and turned to go.

"Hold! The first man who moves will get a volley!" said Captain Walton.

"We surrender!" said the pirate leader, sullenly.

"Throw down your arms. Men, secure them, and bundle them down with Hank Walker. I guess they won't need an introduction. Officer, look to Bill, forward there. I think they have either killed or wounded him."

"You mistake us, cap'n. We aren't no pirates. We wants provisions," said the leader.

"All right; we'll provide for you. Away with them below, and place them in irons!"

"Ah, here comes Mr. Prescott."

"Yes. Lower that port quarter boat. I want to go on board their vessel, and see if there are any more of them. Hoxen and Bailis, take the oars. Mr. Crocker, go with me."

A ready response was given. The men took their stations in the boat, which was quickly lowered from the davits, reaching the water just as Prescott and his boat's crew came alongside.

In a few words Captain Walton explained the presence of the sealing vessel, and what had just taken place on the deck of the yacht.

"Ah! that accounts for Walker's refusal to accompany me. I see it all now. But let us go on board, and see what we can find."

They accomplished this with some considerable difficulty, but once on board, they found two Icelandic sailors bound and stowed away forward, they being the only persons on board.

Through the interpreter, Tutu, they told the story of being overpowered, the same story which the reader already knows, and the shameful outrages which they had endured at the hands of the American pirates.

This being established beyond a doubt, George Prescott ordered a supply of provisions to be given them so that they might return to Iceland again, there to await justice.

In a short time all was tranquil again, and the little sealer stood away homeward, while up came the anchor of the

Yankee Land, and her head was once more pointed toward the frozen north.

Of course, the dramatic episode was the subject of conversation with both officers and men, for it was a great event, and with only the wounding of one person.

"I have made up my mind to head for the north, and go as far as possible, trusting to chance rather than to any information we can get out of these rascals. But I am firmly convinced that we have nearly every one of the crew of the Columbus in irons," said Prescott that evening, as they sat at supper.

"I wonder if torture would worm the secret from them?" asked Captain Walton.

"You just let me talk to them awhile, and I'll warrant you, George, that I can make them acknowledge where they left him," said Miss Yumper.

"Would you call that torture, aunty?"

"Well, I'd like to try it."

"But, to tell the truth, my friends, I do not think they know exactly where they parted company with Captain Blaine. They left in the long boat, and drifted around nearly a week without chart or compass, so faithful Tutu informs me that he learned, and were finally picked up by a whaler, and a month afterward landed at Iceland, where we found them. So I do not believe they could do more than guess at the locality if they tried. For that reason I think it best to make Spitzbergen without further delay, and probably we may hear some tidings there."

"I trust so. But we must keep a sharp lookout for icebergs. Spring is upon us, and they will soon begin to move to the southward, which increases our danger materially."

"That is very true. But no danger must be thought of in this case. If my old friend, my father's friend, is alive, he must be found and rescued," said Prescott, earnestly.

Clara watched him with a swelling heart.

"Always yes to that. But what of the three shipwrecked men you brought off?"

"They belonged to the whaling ship Putnam, of New Bedford, the sole survivors; one of them seems but a mere boy, the other two are old tars. I shall keep them until we return to Portland, unless I find a better chance to send them home in the meantime. But the Yankee Land has accommodations enough, even for a dozen more, be they pirates or castaways. We are doing some good, even if we fail in attaining our chief object."

"You are right, George, but I think you ought to let me talk to those men. Don't you think it would be a good idea, Professor Scatterbiter?"

"Miss Yumper, if I vos a pirate, I bade you dot you could talk plendy dings of me oud right avay," replied the professor.

"Oh, professor, you are too old a man to be a flatterer. I am ashamed of you," said she, half coquettishly.

"Vell, I vos ershamed for myself," he replied, evidently not knowing that he had put his foot into it and made the matter worse.

"Oh, well, aunty, you shall have a talk with them," said Prescott, coming to the rescue. "Tell me, captain, was Bill badly wounded?"

"The doctor says not, although he will not be fit for active duty for some time."

"Well, see that he wants for nothing. Set a double lookout to-night, and to-morrow we will go over the charts again."

"Very well," and with this they separated for the night, leaving Miss Yumper and Professor Scatterbiter to wind up the evening's conversation.

CHAPTER XIV.

TOM O'SHANTER MAKES A DISCOVERY.

The next morning dawned crisp and clear, although the warmth of the gradually ascending sun was quite perceptible in those far-away northern latitudes. It was now the first of May, and the sun remained above the horizon for nearly three hours, which seems about the same in warmth to those lone inhabitants as does the weather of June to us.

The Yankee Land was forging ahead at the rate of thirteen miles per hour, almost at her best speed, although a sharp lookout had to be maintained on account of the icebergs which at this season of the year begin to break away from their winter moorings and to float slowly toward the equator, there to melt and mingle their chilly waters with those of the Gulf Stream, only to return again by another course to go through the same process the next or future years.

The yacht was now headed for Spitzbergen, the mutinous rascals all secure on board and anxiety visible in every face.

Miss Hulda Yumper, still confident that she could talk the secret from the pirates regarding the locality where Captain Blaine and son had been abandoned, attempted it the next morning, but received only abuse and insult from them to such a degree that she was glad to retire from their disgusting presence and abandon the task. They had consulted together on matters pertaining to their common welfare under the circumstances, and had agreed to continue to deny their identity, and rest their hope of ultimate escape from the toils they were in on the improbability of their ever finding Captain Blaine, or, at all events, of finding him alive.

It was while she was attempting to do this that Tom O'Shanter, or "Maggie," went on deck to carry some delicacy to the rescued seamen, which Prescott had ordered them from the cabin table, that he was struck by the appearance of the youngest of the three, into whose face he gazed inquiringly.

"Mr. Prescott bid me warm yer bellies wid that," said he, handing them each a dish, at which the young castaway started as though recognizing the voice.

"God bless Mr. Prescott, I wish he was the owner of the world," said the oldest of the sailors.

"Ay—ay, for then every mother's son would be sure to have a good bit," said the other.

"Troth, yez may well say that. A decent man never walked a deck," replied Tom, at which the young sailor looked at him again strangely.

"Where ther divil have I seen that chap before?" mused Tom.

"If that person didn't have petticoats on, I'd swear it was my Tom," mused the sailor lad, while the other two partook of their food.

"Begorra, but I've surely seen them eyes somewhere before," muttered Tom.

"I wouldn't wonder but she's a sister av my Tom; I'll ax her, so I will. I say, lass, may I speake ter yez a bit this way?" he asked, going to the port side where they would be alone.

"Troth, if it's sparkin' ye mane, I'm the divil at it, so I am," replied Tom, following him. "I ha' w a pint o' eye like your'n onet that got ther best av me, so they did."

"Oh, then ye've been sparkin' at me?"

"Troth, I have, many times."

"Did yez iver have a brother?"

"I did."

"Tom O'Shanter?"

"Bad luck ter me, but that's meself an' not me brother at

all!" mused Tom, aside. "Yer roight, it was that same. Did yez iver have a sister?"

"I have."

"Kate?"

"Yes."

"Was she iver married?"

"Yes, to a blackguard by the name of Tom O'Shanter, ther same that's yer brother, bad luck ter him," replied the sailor lad, at which Tom nearly leaped out of his petticoats.

"Whew! bejabers, but then we're relations," and without speaking they took a closer look at each other.

The keen eyes of the sailor lad penetrated Tom's disguise. He could see the wig in spite of the artfully-arranged cap he wore, and as he had not yet had time to shave that morning, he saw also indications of masculinity which others might have seen had they been in the least suspicious.

Tom's eyes were not idle either, for on closer inspection he saw, in spite of the rough sailor's garb, that this sailor was a girl in disguise.

Here was a coincidence that both became aware of at the same moment, and which made it very awkward for each of them. But both hesitated and neither dared to speak what they felt they knew.

"Whist!" said Tom, in a whisper, "I'll not brathe a worrud, but yer Kate O'Shanter herself!"

"An' ye're me husband, Tom O'Shanter."

"Be aisy now, Kate, I'll fix it all right."

"How?"

"We're near av a size."

"What av that?"

"We'll swap rigs! Ye shall take my place as ladies' maid, an' I'll take yours as the castaway sailor, an' nobody'll know ther betther."

It was a great relief to both of them to get once more into their proper clothes, but after Kate had fixed the wig and cap, and Tom had assumed the sailor garb, it would have been almost impossible to tell that there had been any change at all, for there stood Tom as the castaway sailor, "Tom," and Kate as "Maggie," the ladies' maid, just as before, as it were.

Then they began to swap instructions regarding what was to be done by each. Tom posted her well about her duties and the sort of a woman Miss Yumper was, and the little she was required to do for Miss Blaine, and by the time she was called to attend on her for the purpose of doing up her hair, she was thoroughly posted.

Tom had made rather poor work of this part of his duties, and it was only once in a while, when Miss Yumper did not notice it, that he would allow himself a smile, so awkward was he. She was not exactly right on this occasion, and called Maggie out to let it go up properly, for the yacht was rolling rather uncomfortably.

But Kate was quite an adept at doing up hair, and although she had no experience in quite a long time, yet she took hold of the business much better than Tom had ever been able to do.

"There, I always knew you could do better than you ever have done," said Miss Yumper. "The great trouble with you, Maggie, is that your thoughts are too much on those sailors on deck. But now that I have talked you out of that foolishness, I guess you will make a good maid. There, that's right."

Poor Kate did not dare trust herself with a reply just then, for her heart was thumping over the strange events which had befallen her. But she kept at her work with deft hands, and soon had the old girl looking better than she had done during the trip, when placed her creely, at the hoped it would Prescott, a Scotch lad.

Then she dressed Clara Blaine's golden hair, really astonishing both of them by the improvement she had lately made. But Kate was quite artful, and assured them that she was determined to do better in the future than she had done in the past; and left to herself after awhile, she proceeded with the rest of her duties which her husband Tom had instructed her in, while he posed on deck, unsuspected, as the castaway sailor.

Hour after hour, both in daylight and the starlit night, did the brave Yankee Land drive her prow further north on her errand of mercy, while the prayers of a stricken girl on board were wafted to Heaven from a tender, trusting heart.

CHAPTER XV.

A LAST AND DESPERATE VENTURE FOR ESCAPE.

The glorious sun had again begun to shine upon that far-away barren island where Captain Blaine, his son and Jack Studley had been existing so long and lost to the world, and with its coming came rope again into their hearts.

Jack Studley, true to the oath he had taken over the body of his intended victim, had remained the steadfast friend of Captain Blaine, indeed, almost his abject slave, scouring the island with his ax and gun in quest of game, which, with the return of spring, began to be more plentiful. In fact, with the seals, sea lions, and two or three walrus which they had captured, they were well stocked with meat, and, with the skins, armed also against the cold.

But still no friendly sail came in sight. Day after day they eagerly watched the southern horizon in the hope of seeing one, but none appeared.

By this time the pack ice began to break up, and huge mountains of it to detach themselves from the island and slowly float away.

Captain Blaine watched the course of these, and seeing that they tended to the south, he finally made up his mind to make a bold venture for the liberty which fortune was denying him as he waited.

This venture was nothing less than getting upon one of those icebergs, into which they were to cut a cave for shelter, and stocking it with the furs and meat they had on hand, to drift with it further south in the hope of being picked up before it should reach a latitude low enough to melt it, and thus make their situation worse than ever.

It was a bold project, but both his son and Jack Studley entered into it with all their hearts, and no time was lost in preparing one of the icebergs which seemed about ready to detach itself from the island where it had clung so long.

At the end of four days they had the satisfaction of seeing their work completed, when they had only to rest and wait until the huge mountain of ice should be detached and bear them away.

"Jack, I suspect that we have completed this job just in time," said Captain Blaine.

"Well, captain, if we are soon enough, it is better than not to be."

"True; but I notice that the pack ice has been moving rapidly to day, and as soon as that is out of the way, this iceberg will probably be detached, and then have out to sea."

"And where do you think it will drift?" asked the captain.

"Heaven only knows, for we have not even heard of it, and I don't suppose any one has ever been on this desolate island."

"That's so, captain. Anywhere but here, even if it is the bottom of the sea," said Jack.

"I guess we shall soon get away, for two or three times within a few hours I have felt as though we were afloat," said young Blaine.

"God grant we may be, for if it does not sink further down than it now is, we shall be well above the water, and I think it can stand a two months' drift before it melts sufficiently to let the waves in upon us."

"And in that time we ought to be rescued if ever we are to be."

"True. But it worse comes to worst, we can cut notches above us in the ice and climb up to a hole that we can cut out still higher."

"Right you are, captain, and I guess I will commence another chamber higher up in the morning."

"All right. But we must remember that the air will melt the iceberg quite as fast as the water will, and that even both of our cabins may soon be useless. However, we can simply do our best, and leave the rest to Providence."

"Hark!" exclaimed the boy. "Did you not hear that groaning, crunching sound?"

"Yes, and I feel a motion as though the berg had broken away from its moorings."

"It must be so," said Jack, springing out.

They all listened, and watched for some evidence of motion, but if the ice mountain moved at all, it was so slow that it was imperceptible because of its tremendous weight and size.

"I think it is detached from the island, but it will take a long time to get such a mass as this is in motion."

"But will it continue to move so slowly, father?"

"No, I should judge that it might take a day for it to get the full motion of the tide, provided it is not assisted by the wind, and then we shall probably drift two or three miles per hour."

"Heaven! that will take us a lifetime to get near the general track of passing vessels," said the boy, despondingly.

"It will be slow work at best, my son, but even that is better than remaining here with no motion at all. But this north wind will help us some."

"Yes, and it blows hard enough, Heaven knows," said Jack, looking out.

"I hope it will start before dark."

"And yet it may not, for it become many degrees colder after dark—or, rather, when the sun declines, and that may keep it in place."

It was now close upon sunset—that is, what may be called sunset in these high latitudes, for during midsummer there the sun does not wholly disappear during an entire revolution of the earth. It sinks down in the south almost to the horizon and then gradually rises again until it shows about what we would call a sun three or four hours high—when it again begins to go down, presenting one of the most beautiful phases of nature to be seen anywhere.

On this account people say that they have a day six months long, followed by a night of the same length; and although this is not strictly true, yet it is near enough to it to enable the reader to understand the situation.

Captain Blaine and his party had put in a very hard day's work, and now that the sun was going down, they proceeded to prepare some food, after which they all threw themselves upon their skins and soon fell asleep.

They slept soundly for several hours, and when they awoke the sun had started on his slow return toward the zenith and morning was approaching.

Captain Blaine was the first one to arouse, and naturally enough he rushed to the mouth of the cave to see if any of the natives had come in while they had been sleeping.

"God in Heaven! we are afloat!" he cried, at which the other two roused up quickly.

"What is that you say?" demanded Jack.

"We are afloat, Jack—we are afloat! And see, we have left the island at least a mile astern."

"Thank God!"

"Amen!"

"And it sets well in the water, too."

"Yes, as well as could be wished, and the wind is shoving with the tide. Oh, this is glorious!" said the old navigator, with much enthusiasm.

"Hurrah for liberty or death!" cried the boy.

"Yes—yes, my son, and be it whichever it may, we will meet it like American seamen. But we must provide for a night signal which we may need when we get further south, and to do that we will cut a hole in the ice about here so that we can burn some oil if we survive to get far enough south to enjoy day and night."

And even though they might never need such a signal, even though their ice mountain might melt under them before they reached a point where a light would be of any service to them, yet so nearly wild was the old captain at the prospect of liberation, that he at once set to work upon it.

"Away we go, and although we have no compass or chart, and must drift with the wind and the tide, yet we will keep stout hearts and hope for the best. The island where we have been prisoners so long begins to fade away in the distance."

"And I for one am heartily glad of it," said Jack, for, living or dying, I shall always hate it."

"Farewell—good-by!" cried the boy.

"God protect us, for we are wholly in His hands now."

"God protect us!" murmured the boy, earnestly.

"Amen!"

CHAPTER XVI.

SEARCHING AMONG THE ICEBERGS.

Return we to the steam yacht Yankee Land.

How little the ordinary voyager knows of what a journey is to the extreme north!

The searching party, after numerous struggles and narrow escapes, at length reached latitude 70 and longitude 20 north, which took them to the northward of Norway, the most northern outpost of civilization.

They stopped at Christiana to take in a supply of coal, and, if possible, to gain some information regarding islands lying further to the north and east, many of which are not put down on the charts, but of which the hardy Norwegian seal and walrus hunters most likely knew something.

The authorities received them with the greatest courtesy, and rendered them all the assistance in their power in tracking Captain Blaine, who had remained in and around Norway for two or three months the season before, leaving there and sailing in a northeasterly direction, with the avowed intention of finding and locating the many islands which the fishermen had told them of.

George Prescott and Captain Walton applied themselves with the greatest earnestness to interviewing these fishermen, several of whom had conversed with the bold navigator before he set out on his last voyage of discovery in the interest of science and navigation.

The result was exceedingly gratifying to them, for, taking the date of Captain Blaine's dispatch, which had been picked up in a bottle, October 5, 1863, and comparing it with the date they received from the authorities and the fishermen, they were enabled to form a very good estimate of how far

he could have sailed in a northeasterly direction at that season of the year before the Columbus struck upon a hidden rock and went to pieces.

Thus advised they set sail again, calculating that they were going over almost the same route that Blaine went over. In fact, it seemed as though they were surely on his track, and that nothing but some unforeseen accident would prevent their finding him sooner or later, but probably before the short summer was over with. Find him how—dead or alive?

But the way was full of dangers. Indeed, it was more so at this season of the year than it would have been in midwinter, for now they were obliged to keep a double watch for icebergs and to steam a portion of the time at half speed, whereas in winter these huge dangers were locked and frozen to their native shores, and although having to depend almost entirely upon the Northern Lights, it was really less dangerous navigating.

True, the weather was so much warmer now that those on board the yacht were enabled to throw off much of the thick Arctic clothing and clumsy furs they had worn so long, and to appear more like what they were, American sailors and citizens.

There had been, and was no sickness on board the yacht, and the landsmen had become so used to a life on the ocean wave that they did not mind it at all. Indeed, they rather enjoyed it.

Besides, there was the novelty of being in almost a winter climate at a season of the year when those at home were sweltering beneath the vertical rays of a summer sun, unable to keep either cool or happy.

The prisoners still remained in close confinement in the hold amidships, with a guard so strictly kept that it was impossible for them to plot or execute any mischief to themselves or others. In fact, they seemed perfectly aware of this fact, and made no effort to escape, although they gladly would have done so had there been the slightest peg to hang a hope upon, and they staked everything in a sullen way upon the utter improbability of Prescott's ever finding Captain Blaine alive, or even dead.

True enough it was that the confinement was becoming irksome, and nothing but the belief which they all indulged in would have kept them up.

"Where are we now?" asked Hank Walker, of the guard, while they were at Norway.

"At Christiana, Norway," was the reply.

The rascals exchanged glances, for they knew that it was from here that Captain Blaine set out on his last and most unfortunate voyage. But still the belief that he was dead long ago, and that there remained not a solitary particle of evidence against them, still buoyed them up.

And even when they overheard the next day that the yacht had been put upon the probable route taken by the Columbus, they did not lose heart at all, so well grounded was their hope.

As for Professor Scatterbiter, the change in the season made him feel much better, and what time he was not courting Miss Yumper, he was making scientific observations and laying out the plans for a history of the voyage, including his scientific researches and other matters of interest, as well as an account of Captain Blaine's previous discoveries and his probable fatal shipwreck.

That book was afterwards published, and to it I owe much of the data which I have employed in writing this story.

But one of the most interesting studies for the navigator who reaches this extreme northern degree is the action of the magnetic needle, for the electrical currents of the earth which cause it to point nearly north and south appear to make a magnetic pole somewhere in the extreme northeastern

portion of Norway, beyond which point it becomes almost useless. In fact, it becomes wholly so a few degrees further north, and often reverses on its axis, so that the navigator is left without any guide whatever but that afforded by the stars.

Even where they now were the compass "dipped," or pointed downwards, so that it nearly stood on end, with the south pole in the air and the north pole pointing nearly to the bottom of the vessel.

The phenomenon attracted nearly all of the old scientist's attention, for, although he had read much of the needle's "dip," this was the first time that he had ever witnessed it, or had a chance to experiment in connection with it.

In speaking of the yacht's crew, it will be remembered that Tom O'Shanter made the queer discovery, while disguised in female attire, and acting the part of lady's maid to Miss Yumper and Clara Blaine, that one of the rescued whalers was no other than his wife Kate, in the disguise of a sailor, and that they immediately changed costumes, he assuming her rig and pretending to be the rescued sailor, while she assumed her own proper garb and took his place as Miss Yumper's maid.

This arrangement was pleasing to the ladies. They, of course, knew nothing of the facts, for had the truth been known, Miss Yumper would certainly have had a double and twisted fit; but believing that the girl had greatly improved, they never tired of talking about it and complimenting her, all of which was very pleasing to Mrs. O'Shanter, who, of course, kept the secret well, while she and Tom became wholly reconciled and appeared to be far happier than they ever were before this curious separation after a row, and the unnatural assumption of disguises.

The arrangement also pleased Tom, who was not overmuch in love with work, even of the easiest kind; for now that he was posturing as a shipwrecked whaler who had been rescued and was being taken back to the United States, he, of course, imagined that he would have nothing to do but rally around the mess-tub and smoke his pipe, a thing he had not been able to do much before while acting the part of ladies' maid.

In fact, the few pulls which he had been able to snatch from his dhudeen had come very near getting him into trouble with Miss Yumper, who would have it that he had been smoking a nasty pipe, she knew by the smell of his breath. True, he crawled out of it by saying that he had been among the sailors who smoked, but this only produced a remonstrance from her against a lady's maid keeping such close company with horrid sailors as to get the perfume of the pipes they smoked.

Now, however, he could smoke as much as he liked; and, as before stated, he also made up his mind that he would have nothing to do but loaf.

But on getting into this high latitude, the continual demand for men to stay aloft to keep a lookout for icebergs, and the uncertainty of the compass calling for more help, the three rescued whalers were put to work before the mast in order to relieve members of the regular crew.

And, of course, Tom O'Shanter was obliged to bear a hand with the others, greatly to his disgust; for the work was quite hard, and he wished with all his heart that his wife had not been rescued, for he would much rather have been a widower than have been obliged to work before the mast.

"I say, Kate, I've a moind ter kick," said he to her one day, after his assignment.

"Kick what?" she asked, wonderingly.

"Kick meself, faith—kick agin this havin' to work like the devil. Sure, it's wuss nor before."

"But isn't it betther for you than me?"

"Devil a wanst," he growled.

"Why not?"

"Why not! Sure, I'm afther thinkin' that it wud be betther for anybody ter do the work than me. An' see how aisy yer havin' it!"

"An', sure, aren't I a woman? Now, Tommy, darlint, didn't ye swear that ye loved me?"

"I'm not talkin' that I don't love ye; I'm sayin' that I don't love worruk, bad luck ter it!"

"But ye can't be sorry that yer darlint little wife gets clear av it in yer place. Och, Tommy, I know yer don't fale that way ter me," said she, looking around to see that they were not observed, and then giving him a kiss.

This pacified him somewhat, and he went sullenly back to his post again. But this scene between them had been observed by the man at the wheel, and as he had himself tried several times to make up to the good-looking maid, he became jealous at once, and resolved to give Tom a good drubbing the next time he got a chance.

Nor was this man the only one of the sailors who had taken a fancy to Mrs. O'Shanter, and although Tom held his own in a fight that night in the forecastle, he found himself continually in hot water on account of the intimacy which had been observed several times between him and Miss Yumper's maid. In fact, even the boatswain pretended to be in love with her, and he rather enjoyed seeing Tom picked upon and made unhappy.

"Bad luck ter me luck anyway, say I. I wonder how ther devil it is at all at all that none av these blackguards made love ter me when I was in her place? Sure, it must be because she's betther-lookin' nor I am. But fut ther devil would they say anyway ef they knew she was me wife?" he mused, but it only worked upon him as it does upon the majority of husbands—made him think all the more of her, now that he found others in love with her.

"Land, ho!" shouted the lookout in the crosstrees.

"Where away?" demanded Captain Walton, seizing a telescope, as did George Prescott.

"Two points on the weather-beam, sir."

Quickly adjusting their glasses, they looked in the direction indicated, while the professor, Miss Yumper and Miss Blaine gathered around them.

CHAPTER XVII.

ADRIFT ON AN ICEBERG.

"What do you make it out to be, captain?" asked George Prescott, lowering his glass.

"Nothing but an iceberg," replied Captain Walton.

"That's all I make it out to be."

"Only an iceberg!" sighed Clara Blaine, who was continually on the alert, now that she felt sure of being on her father's track.

"Only an iceberg!" echoed Miss Yumper.

"Dot vos a great deal of ice pizness up on dis yey," added Professor Scatterbiter, trying to be jocular in order to relieve the evident disappointment of Miss Blaine.

"Nothing but ice."

"And yet it is the largest mass of it we have so far seen," said Captain Walton.

And then turning to the man at the wheel he told him to alter the yacht's course about three points to the north, so as to make sure of passing the chilly mountain in safety.

* * * * *

We left Captain Blaine and party adrift on an iceberg, into

which they had cut a deep cave for protection and the storing of their provisions.

Day after day they drifted slowly with the wind and tide, keeping a sharp lookout all the while, but for two weeks without ever seeing a thing except a few sea-gulls, or now and then a whale who came to the surface to blow.

And even these cheered them, and held out hopes that some whaler might yet be encountered who was out in quest of these Leviathans of the deep.

But there were many indications that they were moving slowly southward, the most to be regretted of which was the melting of the iceberg, both above and below water.

There could be no mistake about this, and that the huge mountain of ice was becoming smaller every day, for not only could they see and hear the rivulets of water which poured down its sides into the ocean, but the practiced eye of Captain Blaine could not mistake the fact of their being at least a yard nearer the surface of the water now than when they started, two weeks ago.

They took turns at keeping watch, but day after day nothing rewarded them. Captain Blaine did all in his power to keep up his own and the spirits of his companions.

He knew Jack Studley needed this more than either himself or son, for continual watching and anxiety had so unstrung him that he at times laughed like an idiot, and talked incoherently. Of all other dangers Captain Blaine dreaded this most, for he had often known of people going mad under a long mental strain such as this faithful fellow was enduring now, and should such a fate befall him he was liable to harm himself or others, if not to destroy the only hope they now had left to cling to.

So he told stories, sang songs, and one day told him a romance about a beautiful dream which he had, which almost anybody would have interpreted into an omen of speedy rescue.

The effect of this "yarn" upon Jack was a good one, and braced him up for two or three days, and made him act more like himself again.

But the continued watching, hour after hour, day after day; the slow, but certain, dissolution of the iceberg; the looking and hoping without seeing the gleaming of a solitary sail; the terrible stretch of the ever-agitated sea; the dreadful sense of utter helplessness and loneliness wore upon the poor fellow, in spite of all that Captain Blaine and his son could do.

"We are all melting away," he would say, every two or three minutes, as his eye swept the horizon.

"Oh, not so very fast, Jack. We are good for a month yet, and before half that time has gone we shall be rescued and my dream fulfilled."

Then, with his wild, glittering eyes, Jack would scan the horizon again, and presently make the same remark, and in such a wild way that it surely would have startled a man of less nerve than Captain Blaine.

Nearly ever since the iceberg began to drift it was noticed that it had at the same time a slightly revolving motion; that is to say, it turned twice or three times around during twenty-four hours, and this enabled them to sweep the whole horizon as far as the eye could reach, which could not have been their fortune had it floated with a continual forward motion.

Of course, it was utterly impossible to keep any sort of reckoning, and it was the merest guesswork about where they were. They only knew that they were drifting slowly southward.

But all this did not trouble the bold navigators so much as did the condition of Jack Studley. There was positive terror of his going mad under the terrible strain he was enduring, and Blaine never allowed him to make a move unobserved. If he had only possessed a pack of cards, so that he might have

engaged with him in a game; he would not have feared the result as he now did.

But this continual watching and dwelling upon the prospect of release was more of a strain than most men can endure and retain their senses.

And finally the strain began to tell upon both father and son, and the songs he sung to amuse and distract Jack's attention began to sound wild and hollow. He knew himself that they did not sound as they had at first, and he feared that he should yet lose his own senses, and perhaps be the first one, after all, to go wrong.

The thought was dreadful, and he prayed with all his heart and remaining sense that God would spare him from that terrible calamity.

"We are all melting away!" moaned Jack.

"Nonsense!"

"Why, look at it," Mrs. Brown. It isn't half so big as it was," said he, showing increased evidence of his mental breaking up.

"Jack, we are all right, I tell you, and I'll bet you a hundred dollars we shall be rescued before three days have gone by," said the captain.

"Oh, yes, we shall be rescued, Mrs. Brown. The devil will take us off, and carry us to Davy Jones' locker. I just heard him say so."

"Nonsense, Jack! You are dreaming."

"No, I just heard him say so. But he shall not get me. I'll head him off. Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed, wildly, and catching up the hatchet, he darted out to the mouth of the cave.

"Hold on, Jack! What are you going to do?" asked the captain, in great terror, while his son clung to him in affright, not knowing what the result would be.

"I'm going aloft to watch for the devil, and if he comes near me I'll brain him."

"Don't be foolish, Jack. The devil will not bother us."

"No—no! Jack, don't make our case worse than it now is," said the boy. "Say the prayers I taught you, Jack."

"Ah, I hear him! Avast there, I'm for you!" he cried, and seizing hold of a projection near the mouth of the cave, he pulled himself outside of it, a thing no sane man would dared to have done.

"Come back here, Jack; you will certainly fall into the water and be lost!" exclaimed the captain, springing to the outside of the cave.

"Back, or I'll have your blood first," replied the maniac, raising the hatchet to strike him.

"Listen to reason, Jack."

"Listen to the devil! Hark! Don't you hear him?"

"No—no, that is only the wind."

"I know what it is; it's the devil come to take me to Davy Jones! Ah! I'll fool him yet," said he, cutting madly into the side of the iceberg.

Captain Blaine had sense enough left to know that Jack was hopelessly mad, and that it would also be madness on his part to attempt to interfere with him, and not wishing to see him continue madly, he clasped his son and withdrew with him into the cave, leaving Jack to work out his own destruction.

Yelling like a madman, he continued to climb away at the ice, making one hole or stepping-place above another, and climbing up higher and higher with astonishing rapidity.

The iceberg towered nearly a hundred feet above the cave, but in less than half an hour he had climbed its rough, slanting sides, and now sat perched upon the highest pinnacle, flourishing his hatchet and daring the treacherous devil to approach him. Finally, in a paroxysm wilder than the other, he threw the hatchet at what he supposed to be the approaching fiend, and away it sped, down into the sea, lost forever.

"Thank God! He is now mad, I tell you if he should return

he would be unable to harm us," said the captain, who had been narrowly watching him.

"Yes, but you lie down, first, father, for you are more in need of rest than I am," said the noble boy.

"An hour's sleep would do me a world of good, for I am sadly in need of it. But do you feel sufficiently awake to watch Jack while I sleep?"

"Yes, father, you know I slept well last night, and I feel greatly refreshed. So you lie down, and if Jack attempts to come down I will take in the gun and wake you up."

"Very well," said he, and throwing himself upon a bed of skins, tired nature soon gave way, and the weary navigator fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON BOARD THE "YANKEE LAND."

"Below there!" from the foremast lookout.

"Ay—ay!" came a response from the man at the wheel.

"Will you ask Captain Walton to come aloft here?"

"Ay—ay," and word was passed below, whither he had gone soon after the controversy relating to the iceberg in the preceding chapter.

"What is it, Maynard?" he called, as he came up out of the cabin.

"I wish you would just come up here, sir, with your glass, so as to make sure that mine is working right," replied Maynard.

Without a word Captain Walton seized his telescope, and sprang into the shrouds. Climbing nimbly up the ratlines, he was soon on the crosstree where the lookout was stationed.

"What is it?"

"That iceberg to port there," he replied, pointing to the same huge mass of ice which had been sighted an hour before, and which they were now slowly going to the larboard of.

"Why, haven't you got through with that yet? What about it, man?"

"Well, sir, since we began to sheer off and give her points, I fancy I can see something black on it, and I thought you would like to take a look at it yourself, sir."

"It is probably a bear or a seal," and he leveled his glass at it.

"Do you see anything, sir?"

"Yes. I see something black, but I can't make it out exactly. I guess, however, that it is only a seal, or possibly a walrus," and Captain Walton closed his glass.

Casting another look around the horizon, he went below, leaving the lookout feeling a trifle foolish.

An hour passed on, during which time the lookout took an occasional peep at the iceberg as they were slowly sweeping around it.

"Below there!" from Maynard in the cross-tree.

"Ay—ay!"

"I would like to have Mr. Prescott come up here for a moment."

"All right; I'll be right aloft with you," said Prescott, who was standing on the bridge near the wheel-house.

"Maynard seems to be troubled about that iceberg," said Captain Walton, as the owner turned away.

"Well, I told him to keep a close lookout, and, being a faithful fellow, he would probably think he hadn't done his duty if he did not report everything," replied Prescott, and the next moment he was aloft. "What is it, my man?"

"There is something on that iceberg, sir, and I'd like to see if you can make it out," said Maynard, handing him his telescope.

"Where is it, and what do you think it is?"

"Away up in the top. You can't see it with the naked eye—there is so much sun dazzle. But I have been watching it for

some time, sir, and I begs your pardon for callin' you up here, but I can't git it out of my head that it's a man up there."

He looked for a full minute without lowering the glass. The sight was not a good one, owing to the peculiar dazzle which surrounds an iceberg when the sun is shining upon it.

"Can you make it out, sir?" asked the old sailor, finally.

"Not exactly; but, as you say, it does resemble a human being more than a seal, bear, or walrus, although it is utterly motionless and must have frozen to death," and he raised the glass once more, as the sun went behind a cloud.

"But I think I have seen it move once or twice, sir," suggested the sailor, respectfully.

"That may have been on account of the waver of the light. Yes, I thought I saw it move just then, and yet I cannot make out whether it is man or beast."

"Would it do any harm to put the helm down a few points, and run nearer to it, sir?"

"No, I think not. There can be no harm in doing so, and it shall be done. Captain Walton!" he called.

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Starboard about two points, and run closer to the iceberg, if you please."

Meanwhile a double watch was stationed forward, and George Prescott kept his glass upon the object that had attracted his attention.

There was something strange about the creature on the top of the iceberg, but that it was alive, whether man or beast, there was now no longer room to doubt, for after gazing at it for some time he plainly saw it move, and presently disappear on the opposite side.

Prescott handed the glass to Maynard, and telling him to keep a sharp lookout, and call him the instant he saw anything remarkable, he started to go below, when he was instantly surrounded.

"What is it?" was on every tongue.

"That I don't know; but if there isn't a man on that iceberg there is something so nearly like one in movements that I think it best to bear closer alongside, and see what it is. Captain, make a circuit, so that we can get a view of the other side."

Every glass on board was now brought to bear upon the huge mountain of floating ice, for although there was little or no probability of there being a human being on it, yet curiosity was roused to such a degree that nothing short of finding out just what it was would suffice.

They had by this time approached so near to it that the task of steaming completely around it was comparatively a trifling one as to time, and while all eyes were directed toward it, Maynard, from the cross-trees, shouted again:

"Come aloft, Mr. Prescott!" and in a voice that betokened great excitement.

"What is it?" called Prescott, as he sprang into the shrouds.

"Look, sir—look! there is a signal flying, and there are men on the side swinging their hands to us! Yes, yes, men!"

"God prosper my hope!" murmured Prescott, as he caught the glass from his trembling hand.

"Yes—yes, as sure as we are alive there are men on that iceberg!" said Prescott.

"And there is one coming down the side—yes, that is the one we saw first, and he went down out of sight on the other side. They see us!" and taking off his hat he waved it frantically.

"Fire a gun as quickly as possible, and get the quarter-boat ready to lower, with a crew," he called, as he started to go below.

In an instant all was excitement on board, but the crew was a disciplined one, and even before Prescott reached the quar-

terdeck the cannon sent forth its thunders, which echoed sharply against the sides of the iceberg.

They had now approached so near that the men upon it could be seen with the naked eye, and the reason that they were not seen before was that the iceberg was turned away from them as they approached it.

"Another boat's crew here. Man the other boat, and take a few fathoms of line along!"

"Go as close alongside as you possibly can without danger, Captain Walton," said Prescott, who was all action and excitement now.

"Yes, sir. Starboard a point—so; keep her at that. Steady!" and he rang the bell for the engineer to shut off half speed.

Three persons could now be distinctly seen, and they were giving unmistakable signs of delight.

Clara Blaine stood holding upon Miss Yumper. Not a word did she speak, but she was as white as chalk, and seemed turned to stone.

Meantime the Yankee Land had been slowed down until she was standing nearly stationary, with only about two cable lengths between her and the towering iceberg.

Both of the quarter boats were by this time manned and lowered into the water, Prescott in the stern-sheets of the foremost, and Captain Walton in the other.

The point where the castaways stood was some ten feet above the water, and although the roar of the breakers prevented them from conversing with them, the rescuers at once set to work. A line was thrown up and easily caught, and made fast around a pinnacle of ice, when Jack Studley made a wild flying leap, and caught it with both hands and landed in the boat.

A wild cheer from the crew announced the successful transit, and then Captain Blaine assisted his son to glide down the rope, after which he followed, and was safely received.

"Captain Blaine!" exclaimed Prescott, receiving him with open arms.

"George Prescott!"

The loud, glad shout which followed was heard on board the yacht, and Clara Blaine, comprehending the unsupportable truth, fell, fainting, and was carried into her cabin.

Never dipped oars so stoutly and so heartily as did those which rowed that boat back to the yacht; never beat noble hearts higher than theirs did when they found they had rescued the men for whom they had been searching so long.

The boats drew alongside, the falls hitched on, and quickly hauled chock-a-block in the davits.

A rousing hurrah greeted them, and then a wild season of handshaking followed, during which time questions and answers were freely plied by all.

The yacht steamed ahead around the iceberg and then headed south, as Prescott led Captain Blaine and his son down into the cabin.

"I have another surprise for you, sir," and as he spoke the door of Clara Blaine's cabin opened, and, with a glad shout, she flung herself into her father's arms, and then kissed and embraced her brother.

Prescott left them by themselves, and went on deck, feeling that he had no business to be present at such a meeting.

Jack Studley was nearly himself again, but whether the effect of his supposed killing of the devil when he threw the axe at him from the top of the iceberg had anything to do with it, I leave to wiser heads than mine to determine.

And what a glad reunion that was in the cabin of the Yankee Land that evening as they gathered there for supper. The story of the wreck, the finding of the bottle with the dispatch in it, the long journey in search of him, the capture of the larger portion of the crew of the Columbus was gone over,

after Captain Blaine had told of their long months of suffering in the Polar seas before he ventured at all upon that iceberg. Who could tell such a story that had not experienced the trials and sufferings as they had?

It was late at night when they retired, but there was nothing but happiness on board that noble yacht, from stem to stern.

It required two or three days, however, for the suffering voyagers to become themselves again, and it is needless to say that there could be no happier or more tender nurse than was Clara Blaine.

But after Captain Blaine had fully recovered, he visited the prisoners in the hold. The meeting between them may be imagined, but it cannot be described. The last hope had been knocked out from under the heartless mutineers, and they knew it. But when they heard the loud, glad shouts on deck, they concluded that Blaine had been found, and as a last resort they agreed among themselves to deny all knowledge of him, and swear, to a man, that they had never seen him before. But when they were confronted by Jack Studley, and freely recognized, as they were freely cursed by him, their case seemed hopeless, indeed. Jack, however, could scarcely be restrained from going among them with a belaying-pin and giving them a portion of their deserts.

This, however, he was prevented from doing, being assured that they should be taken back to the United States, where justice of the sternest kind would be dealt out to them—as it afterwards was.

But my story of the wreck of the Columbus is nearly told, for when an author gets to such a point as this, it is much the best way to leave the general finale to the reader, especially when it is so obvious what that end would naturally be, as it is in this case.

The Yankee Land made a splendid trip back to Portland, Maine, stopping only once to take in a supply of coal. And here the rescuers and rescued received the hearty congratulations of the people everywhere.

The papers were full of it, and the conduct of George Prescott commented upon in the highest degree as being something worthy of all praise.

Hank Walker and his fellow rascals were taken to prison, and after a trial they were sentenced for from five to twenty years, Walker coming in for the latter time. Indeed, he is even yet an inmate of the State prison at Thomaston.

A year from the date of their return, there was a brilliant wedding at Portland, at which George Prescott and Clara Blaine acted the principal parts, although Professor Scatterbit and Miss Yumper stood up with them and looked so smiling that one could only conclude that they contemplated something of the same sort.

And so the characters have been disposed of, and the Wreck of the Columbus becomes only a memory, but one that will live long in the hearts of those who had a part in it.

THE END.

Read "AMONG THE GAUCHOS; or, A YANKEE BOY IN SOUTH AMERICA," by Richard R. Montgomery, which will be the next number (469) of "Pluck and Luck."

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